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Vol. Eight, No. Four

February, 1985



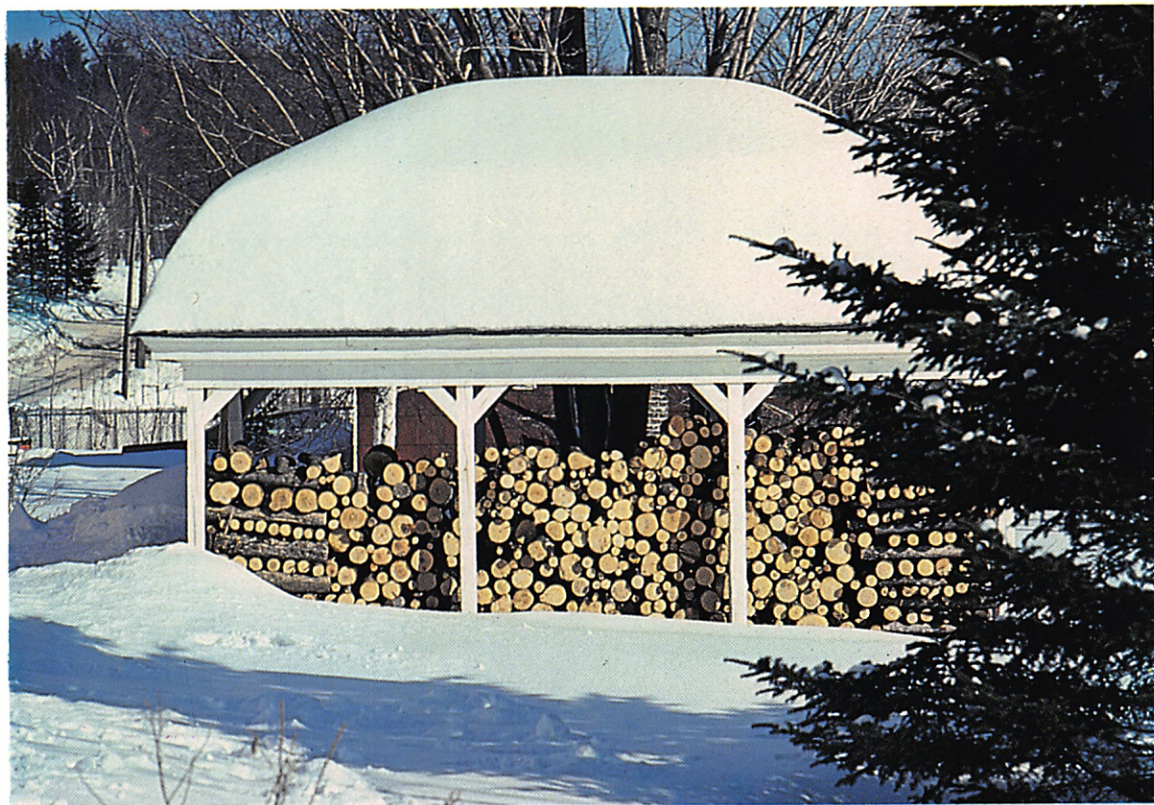
Heroic Husky in Albany, N.H.
Roy Barrette of Amen Farm, Brooklin, Maine
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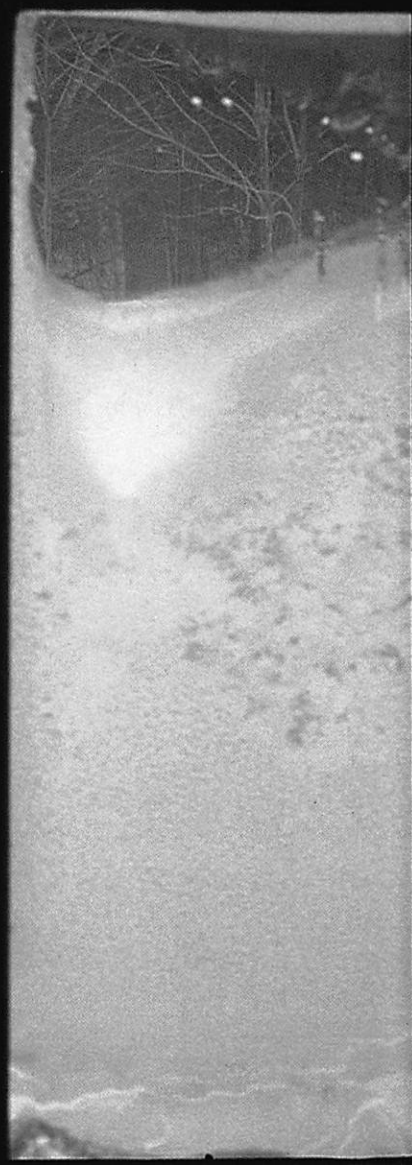


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THE FLAVOR OF
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Ayah letters to the editor

FROST LOVERS

"I should have called it rather something you hadn't to deserve." Read Robert Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man." How many Frost lovers will you rouse?

*Walter W. Wright
Lebanon, NH*

BIRD HILL

Your "Can You Place It?" (page 4 of Dec. 84 issue) picture looks like the Bird Hill Road in Locke Mills.

*Carolyn M. Colby
Bethel, ME*

HOMEY FLAVOR

You sent us a copy of 10/84 we'd requested because Slim's picture was in it. We were so impressed with the homey flavor, beautiful pictures, and literary style ("The Night Visitor" really moved me) that we're ordering a year's subscription. Congratulations on your fine publication.

*Mr. & Mrs. Raymond L. Clark
St. Albans, ME*

The Ballad of Billy D.

Billy went down to the sea, he did,
Went down to the deep, dark sea.
He went in a boat hardly fit for a man
With a sail you could hardly see.

The Governor saw him off, he did,
When Billy pushed off from the quay,
And hundreds lined the wooden docks
To wave our Billy away.

His little cat, and his lovely wife,
And his daughter, newly wed,
Were the last he saw as he tumbled away
In his boat-and-cradle-and-bed.

The mist curled up and the waves looked
mean
As Billy pushed out to sea,
But he turned to smile and lift his hand,
And his eyes looked fearless and free.

Billy was born on a farm, you know,
But the land was too green and still,
And as he waxed strong, his thoughts
grew long,
Too long for the farmboy Bill.

So he got him a truck and took to the road
And delivered potatoes and cheese,
And saved every cent of his trucker's pay
Toward his dream of sailing the seas.

Before he left he sat with my boys
And held the globe in his hands
And traced with his finger the route
he'd sail,
And spoke of the magic lands.

His grin was shy and his voice was soft
But a strange light burned in his eyes
That wouldn't be quaffed by storms or
whales,
For sailors are brave and wise.

So our brave Billy went down to the sea
In a boat the size of a tub.
He made it halfway around the world,
And there, my friends, is the rub.

His little cat waits, and the Governor
waits,
And the wife and the daughter, still,
And I and my sons, and his friends by
the tons,
But nobody's heard from Bill.

*Patricia White
Otisfield, Maine*



*Elaine Dougherty
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*Harry Bee
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BitterSweet (ISSN 0742-1486) is published monthly by BitterSweet, Inc., Woodville, FL 32362, with business and editorial offices at The Cornish Country Inn, Main St., Cornish, ME 04020. Phone (207) 625-3975.

Sales office at P.O. Box 388, East Hampstead, N.H. 03826. Phone (603) 329-5603.

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Single copy rate is \$1.50. Subscription rates are \$15.00 for one year (twelve issues) and \$28.80 for two years (twenty-four issues) in the United States. For foreign addresses, \$21.00 for one year and \$36.00 for two years. Bulk postage paid at Lewiston, ME 04240. Address subscription requests, questions and changes of address (USPS form 3579) to Subscriptions, BitterSweet, P.O. Box 266, Cornish, ME 04020.

We encourage editorial submissions. Please send all submissions to The Editor, BitterSweet, P.O. Box 266, Cornish, ME 04020. BitterSweet will not be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, transparencies, artwork, and other submissions unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage affixed.

Printed in the United States by Twin City Printery, Lewiston, Maine. Typesetting in Garamond type by Western Maine Graphics, Oxford, Maine.

The Library of Congress of the United States is permitted to make this publication available, upon request, to the visually impaired in either Braille or talking book form.

Cross Roads

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- 1 Winter's Window by Dodo Knight
 - 4 Can You Place It?
 - 5 The Music of Hammer and Anvil: Photo Story of Cassidy Bros. Forge by Al Gauthier
 - 8 A Sportsman's Diary: Reflections—My Faithful Dog, Belle by Emery Santerre, Sr.
 - 9 Go Home, Chuska, Go Home! A Story of A Dog's Heroic Rescue Effort by Robert B. Russell
 - 15 Roy Barrette of Amen Farm, Brooklin, Maine: Story & Photos by Jack C. Barnes.
 - 20 Theatre for A State: Portland, Maine Stage Company by Pat Davidson Reef.
 - 23 Winter Haiku
Ice Landscapes — Photos by Dalmar MacPherson
 - 24 Color Photography by Dodo Knight
 - 28 Poetry
 - 29 Color Photo by Dodo Knight
 - 30 Old Man's Journey: Fiction by Stewart Goodwin
 - 33 Readers' Room Essays
Give 'Em Wings by Joan Richardson
World To Our Door by Edith Goodman
New Hampshire People Are Better Natured by Francis X. Holt
The Farm by Ethelyn Nye Pinkham
 - 37 Our Old House. Art by Nancy Strickland
 - 38 Valentine Delights
Eclaire With A "Flaire" by Elizabeth Benson
Gestures of Love by Eulalia Benejam Cobb
Love Tokens
 - 45 Homemade: Ragout by Bea Comas
 - 48 Goings On. Art by Sara Gallant
 - 50 View Askew by Robert Skoglund
 - 51 Notes From Brookfield Farm by Jack C. Barnes
- Cover: Icicles by Dodo Knight

BitterSweet Views for February

The Single-Handed Sailor

In the December, 1981 issue of *BitterSweet*, Pat White introduced many of her Western Maine neighbors to Bill Dunlop, a little-known, shy Mechanic Falls sailor. Since that time, Bill has become one of New England's best-known folks.

People all over the world watched him sail away in "Wind's Will," one of the smallest boats ever to attempt a round-the-world solo voyage. And those same people have been waiting to hear from him ever since he disappeared off the Cook Islands en route to Australia in June, 1984.

While the rest of the world waits, however, his friends and neighbors in Maine have come together to help his family. Fund-raisers are taking place to finance the rescue effort which other friends have organized. People around these hills will continue to help because they have a lot of faith in the men who go down to the sea. There have been many of them, and they have overcome impossible odds in years past.

June seems like an impossibly long time ago — and that's the last time Bill was heard from. But still the faith persists. Just the other day I overheard an old Yankee say, "I guess he's playing Robinson Crusoe." That's a positive thought.

It must be difficult for his family and friends. Pat White is one of those friends now. Recently she woke from a nap with this poem fully formed in her mind. She called me and read "The Ballad of Billy D." (see opposite page) and I felt it was worth sharing with all of you. We'll all keep hoping . . .

Meantime, see more of Pat's sensitive and beautiful poetry on pages 48 and 49. Her book "Riverstones" is available to buy from The Downstairs Press, P.O. Box 216, Bangor, ME 04401. There are other lovely winter poems beginning on page 24.

Nancy Marcotte

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Last month's picture (below) was the old Corn Shop at North Waterford, Me. If you can place the top locale, write us at P.O. Box 6, Cornish, ME 04020. Earliest postmarked correct answer wins a free subscription to BitterSweet.





"Blacksmiths first made the tools that made the tools, that made modern computers possible."

—Peter Cassidy

THE MUSIC OF HAMMER AND ANVIL

by Al Gauthier

There's a sign in front of a block building in Rowley, Massachusetts on Route 1. It reads "CASSIDY BROS. FORGE." Maurice Cassidy, his brothers Peter and Vincent, and two sisters Susan and Rosemary, opened a blacksmith shop there in 1977. The original forge, located on Plum Island, had been in operation since 1973.

Inside the large structure there is grayness. It is a gray not the color of dullness, but of permanence. It's a magical, nebulous something that appears to be patiently waiting; something that symbolizes New England.

Boxes of recently-formed iron scrolls twisted into flowing designs, anvils, and sections of wrought iron fences, andirons and strap hinges, lean along the walls and against the silent machinery. Bluish-gray iron scale—residue from heated iron bars—lies scattered over the dust-covered concrete floor. Tongs, hammers, and cone mandrels blend with the iron stock. Between two large open doors, a brick forge releases wisps of curling smoke from dying coals.

New Englanders, anchored in practicality and with bulldog determination, have always held steadfastly to the

traditions of the past. However, of all the trades and skills passed down from father to son, there is one bordering on obscurity—the blacksmith. The smith's gift to mankind has always been in making tools. From farm implements to hardware for the home, from harpoons for New Bedford whalers, to wrought-iron gates and fences surrounding universities and cemeteries, blacksmiths have provided the tools for civilizations to use to advance progress.

Peter Cassidy is thirty, with a degree in bio-chemistry from Suffolk University. He worked in the research lab at New England Aquarium for a year and a half prior to helping his brother open the new shop in Rowley.

"I was not the least bit impressed with being a blacksmith," he said. "My brother had asked me to help temporarily, but after one month, I was hooked. When you consider something as unyielding as iron, your initial reaction as to the shaping of that metal is difficult to understand."

As he talked, his fingers caressed the smooth top of a much-used anvil. "Just as there's a difference between a

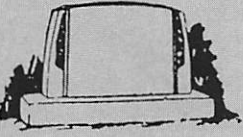


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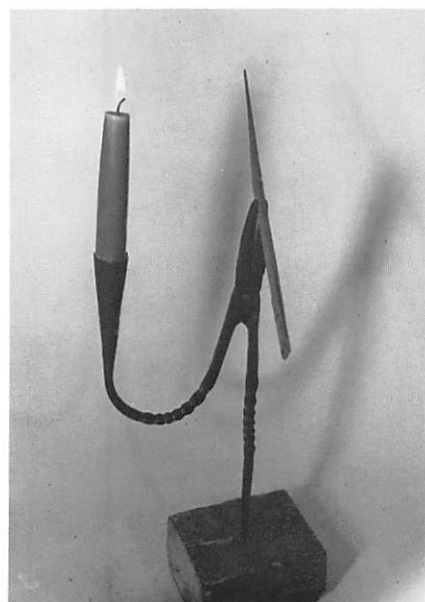
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master blacksmith who creates, and a farrier who fits shoes to horses, there is also a difference between a forge where iron is heated and hammered into shape, and a foundry where iron is melted into a liquid state and poured into molds. Here, we create new designs and perform restorations." He smiled as he continued, "First time I built a 17th century thumb latch, I put it on a door to take a photograph and didn't want to take it down. It looked so realistic.

As I stared at a power hammer originally driven by a water wheel, I commented on what appeared to be the lack of modern technology in the shop.

"We're not completely in the dark ages. We have a metal shear, and some drill presses. We use a small electric fan operated by a rheostat instead of the hand bellows." As he talked, the scent of the heated metal, smoke and fire became stronger. It became easy for the mind to drift back to chained catiffs and sorcerers, when Saxon knights wore suits of chain mail, carried broadswords and went searching into dark labyrinths for dragons.

He pointed to a rusted wrought-iron piece with broken arrowheads. "When we're doing restoration such as that gate, it's not difficult to picture how the artist created it. Using certain tools, he managed to design what the buyer wanted. It's our job to duplicate that process. To do that, it becomes necessary to use similar tools. My brother Maurice has been digging into old barns, attics, cellars, antique shops and flea markets for the last twenty-two years, searching for old blacksmith tools. During that time he's collected well over 400 pairs of tongs, hammers, anvils and enough tools to outfit other blacksmith shops. In fact, we did that for the St. George Village Botanical Gardens at St. Croix last year in the Virgin Islands.



"In addition to what you see scattered around, we make fireplace enclosures, weathervanes, chandeliers, spiral staircases, door knockers, and wrought-iron gates and fences. Each piece is unique, both in appearance and quality." He held up what at first looked like a pair of pliers. "It's called a Rush Light or Poor Man's Candleholder. During the 1700's, it was a very popular way to have light. The good feature about this lamp was the counterweight which was used to secure the rush in the holder. Because rushes were so plentiful around New England, they were gathered and stored in bundles. When dry, the rushes would be dipped in animal fat. Although messy and unsafe, once lit, they would burn from 30 minutes to an hour. New Englanders would spend fourteen to sixteen hours daily working and had little time to spend making candles. Candles at that time were expensive. When candles became inexpensive and plentiful, it was a simple thing to take the counterweight off and replace it with a small candle cup.

"This andiron, I would guess to be about four hundred years old. The spit holder held the meat and the

basket on top held glowing embers for light. This other andiron we made up to provide the pair at the customer's request."

I picked up a fireplace poker with a basket handle. Peter Cassidy explained, "Smiths pride themselves on making long-lasting products. The person who purchases that poker, for example, most likely bought it for their need. Because it's made out of solid stock, it will last longer than the person who purchases it. It will last longer than his children and his children's children."

Look around you. Most of what a smith makes today is guaranteed for life, made for long lasting dependability. Fireplace grates, andirons, strap hinges, outdoor lamps, antique nails, wrought-iron gates and fences, even wrought-iron beds."

While we talked, the color of the iron bar in the forge changed rapidly from cherry red to orange. "How do you determine when the iron is hot enough to shape it?" I asked.

"The best temperature in which to work metal is between 1500 and 2200 degrees. Welding within that range is called 'Forge Welding.' At that temperature, the iron is the color of bright yellow. Temperature hotter than 2400 degrees will cause the metal to burn." He reached for the tongs as he spoke, extracted the iron rod from the fire, and laid it across the anvil.

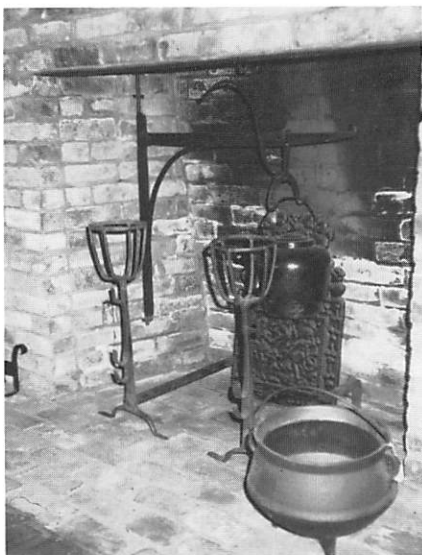
The hammer struck the heated iron as he continued to speak. I stared silently as the cadence of the hammer's tapping continued. The two pieces of iron appeared to fuse together. "The main difference between forge and arc welding is that in forge welding we don't have the bulky lump. The method I'm using to weld this handle is forge welding. We repair and restore gates and iron fences that have lasted hundreds of years. When we're finished with a restored piece, it's very difficult to tell

the original from the work we did."

The scale from the heated metal splattered into an arc of light as the hammer bent the iron like a soft piece of clay and shaped it into a barbed hook. The sweat glistened on Peter's forehead as he talked about master smiths, whose work sometimes took years to complete. The smoke from the forge drifted upwards as he once again thrust the iron in the coals.

What makes a blacksmith shop look so old and yet so recent? There's a feeling that civilization began here. And yet, there's nothing here which represents that greatness.

Peter Cassidy winked at that question. "It's the dust," he said. "It's the smell of the iron, the ringing of the hammer on the anvil, the forge, the fire where dreams and visions are shaped. It's the thread of new ideas, the beginning of tomorrow. It's people like John Gould, blacksmith of Topsfield, who died at the age of 93, in 1973. At the time of his death he still actively worked in his forge. Thoreau once said something about people marching to the tune of different drummers? Well, blacksmiths also march, but the music they hear, they make with hammers and anvils."



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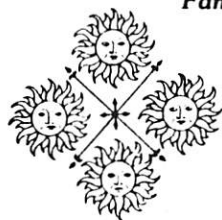
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A Sportsman's Diary

by Emery Santerre, Sr.

The late Mr. Santerre lived in Saco, Maine.

REFLECTIONS — MY FAITHFUL DOG, BELLE

Years ago I was going ice fishing in a small trout pond in northern Maine. I was on skis, dressed for the weather in a heavy mackinaw, etc., with my gear in a knapsack on my back. My companion was a faithful old pointer, Belle. The pond nestled at the foot of a steep hill and as I slid swiftly down the slope, the dog was left floundering in the deep snow.

My momentum shot me way out on the pond. Suddenly, the ice under and all around me collapsed! A spring hole had undermined the ice until only a thin, treacherous shell was left. I was plunged into some five feet of icy water with my skis stuck in mud too soft to hold my weight.

Shocked and numbed by the cold water and hampered with my heavy clothes and knapsack, I struggled futilely to free my feet out of the tangled ski straps. My panicky thrashings were in vain! I was getting weaker, swallowing water—I was drowning!

A whimpering attracted my attention! Belle! With all the strength I had left, I threw my head up and out of the water and gasped, "Come, Girl!"

The intelligent old dog sensed my predicament, never hesitated, plunged

in and swam towards me. My clutching hands found her and the reassurance that I experienced as I felt her strong swimming, dispelled the panic that had overwhelmed me. I relaxed and breathed—good lifegiving air!

Clutching the dog with one hand, I held my breath, ducked under and freed one foot with the other hand. Then I kicked my other foot loose. With the old dog's assistance, I swam to the edge of the hole.

I soon found, however, that my troubles were not all over. Try as I would, in my tired condition, weighed down with my heavy clothes, I was unable to climb out of the water onto the solid ice. Several times I'd almost make it, then the ice would give way under my reaching knee and I'd drop back into the frigid water.

Again I called my "old faithful." Grasping her tail I ordered, begged, pleaded with her to "step up, git along." It took a little while to make her understand what I wanted, but finally she dug in her toes and pulled with all the strength that was in her tough, muscular body. With her help, I squirmed and wriggled myself out of the hole.

The trip back to the road was slow and difficult, but with much floundering, I made it under my own power—thanks to the faithfulness and intelligence of a good old dog.



GO HOME, CHUSKA, GO HOME!

A Story of A Dog's Heroic Rescue Effort

by Robert B. Russell

When Marc Donaldson started out to check the cross country ski trails which led from and to his Inn on that sunny Sunday afternoon of February 20, 1983, he had no idea that within a matter of hours he would be near death.

Marc was 35 years of age and lived with his wife, Maria, and their children in Albany, New Hampshire. Five years ago they had purchased the property which was then called Bald Hill Lodge. They renamed it Darby Field Inn in honor of the first white man to scale Mt. Washington.

As the Innkeeper, Marc refurbished it to accommodate overnight and dinner guests.

The property is located on a gentle north slope which has a magnificent view of the southern end of Mt. Washington Valley, and is minutes away from the popular ski resorts of North Conway and Jackson, New Hampshire. The surrounding countryside is in a fairly remote area which consists of gently rolling mountain foothills with open fields intermixed with stands of hard and softwood trees. Another member of

Marc's family was a long-haired black and white female dog named "Chuska." She was a year and a half old on this fateful day of February 20. She had been born to a Samoyed who lived next door named "Luna." Her father was a Malemute named "Akla" who also lived in the neighborhood. Chuska was a constant companion for Marc's children, the informal greeter of guests at the Inn, and Marc's escort whenever he inspected the Inn's cross country ski trails.

This particular holiday weekend

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had attracted many guests to the Inn so Marc had decided after lunch to check the fifteen miles of trails for trail markers, obstacles, and any other matters that required attending to for the convenience and safety of his guests.

As he put on his smooth bottomed steel edge Telemark racing skis Chuska danced around him with delight in the prospect of going into the woods with her master. Marc took his ski poles, and gloves. He was dressed in pants, a turtleneck sweater, and a down vest. It was a warm 45 degrees F. and sunny when he departed from the Inn at about 1:00 p.m. He inspected the trails and explored a possible new trail route with Chuska who never strayed far from his side. The snow was well packed and the sun had made its surface hard and granular. You could walk on it without punching through its surface.

At about 1:30 p.m. Marc began a descent on his skis down a long steep ice covered narrow trail. It was bounded on both sides by dense woods. As he went faster he quickly realized that he could not stop unless he sat down on the trail. He rapidly approached two boulders on either side of the trail so he sat down on the snow quickly to slow down. Most unfortunately for him he sat down upon a stick that projected up from the middle of the trail. It extended above the surface of the snow for about a foot, and it was inclined in a slight uphill angle. Like a spear, it entered his body, and it broke upon impact within him. Marc felt the stick go into him but he had no sensation of any pain as he skidded to a stop. He looked down at the stick imbedded into the lower part of his torso and he pulled it out.

As soon as he did so, the blood gushed out onto the snow.

He struggled to his feet and skied as slowly as he could to the bottom of

the hill. Chuska was beside him as he went along. Marc knew he was losing a lot of blood and after he had gone about a half a mile from where he had been hurt he collapsed into the snow.

He rested for several minutes and realizing that he must get some help he took off his skis and tried to walk out of the woods on the ski trail. He went further and when he reached an open area he collapsed again. It was about 2:30 p.m. at this time and he knew for certain that he was in very big trouble. Marc packed the wound with snow and tightened his muscles around the wound as best he could to stop the bleeding. Eventually the bleeding subsided, but he knew that he could not go on, as he grew weaker with each passing moment.

Chuska lay down near him and watched. Marc whistled and yelled for help every fifteen minutes or so.

"Go home, Chuska! Go home!" he pleaded to her. He knew that if she left him and returned to the Inn this would alert his wife and employees to commence a search for him. The dog would not leave him, she remained.

He shouted at her and then screamed at her but she would not leave her injured master. He even threw his ski poles at her but she jumped out of the way and lay down on the snow and kept staring at him.

At about 4:00 p.m. the sun began to set and it grew colder. Marc knew that he must stay awake and stay as warm as he could if he was to survive. He thought of his wife and children and he knew that if he gave up that he would die out there in the snow. The nearest house was a quarter of a mile away in a straight line from him and he was in a rarely travelled portion of the ski trail system.

It became darker and the temperature had dropped into the low twenties. Chuska continued to stay with

her master. As he grew weaker, Marc crawled over to her and lay his head upon her back. He did this to keep his head warm and to prevent it from coming in contact with the snow. The dog did not move. She lay in the snow with her master and as Marc would say later, "I could feel the warmth of her body radiating through me...from my head to below my heart."

They lay there on the snow together for an hour. It grew darker but the moonlight made it seem brighter than it really was. Marc could hear the sounds of traffic in the distance and he hoped that help would somehow come to him. He wished at first that the dog had gone for help but as his head rested on her back rather than on the icy snow he thought that perhaps it was best that Chuska had stayed with him.

She moved. She got up and moved away from him and laid down on the snow near him. Marc crawled over to her and laid his head again on her back. He could feel the warmth of her body flow again into his.

It was shortly after 6:00 p.m. by now and Maria wondered where her husband was. She telephoned the Inn which was just across the road from their residence.

"Hi there, is Marc up there?" she inquired.

"No, we thought he was at the house with you."

Maria became alarmed. Marc was always either at the house or at the Inn or somewhere on the property.

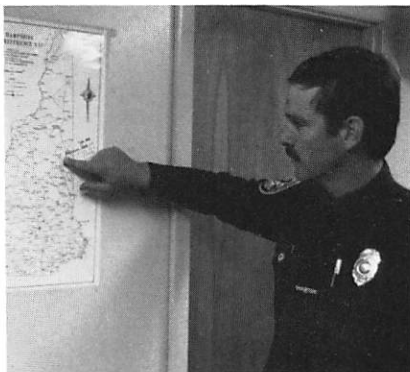
When she discovered that he was last seen going off to check the ski trails with Chuska her anxiety increased. When she learned that Chuska was also missing she was convinced that something serious had happened to her husband.

At about 6:30 p.m. she telephoned the Conway Police Department to report that her husband was missing in the woods. A significant rescue

effort was set in motion by her call. The Conway Police called the Carroll County Sheriff's Department who in turn notified Conservation Officer David C. Beyerle.

He was an experienced paramedic with extensive emergency wilderness rescue training and experience. He was also very experienced in the woods in his work enforcing the fish and game laws for the State of New Hampshire.

Coincidentally, but very fortunate for Marc Donaldson, Officer Beyerle had once been a caretaker at the Inn before it was purchased by the Donaldsons so he knew the trails, road network, and terrain in the area in which the Inn was located.



Officer Beyerle

Officer Beyerle telephoned Mrs. Donaldson. He had to first establish in his mind whether or not Marc was truly missing. His experience taught him that sometimes a person has a fight with a family member and goes off somewhere in a huff, or had gone off to a movie or somewhere, or was having a "few with the boys," or had a history of doing erratic foolish things that led people to believe that something was wrong when it really wasn't. After speaking with Maria for several minutes and asking the right questions to establish that it was very likely that Marc was missing in the woods, he left immediately for the Inn taking

his snowmobile along with him.

When he arrived at the Inn he questioned Maria and one of the Inn's employees, another girl named Diane. He questioned them very carefully about Marc's habits and particularly about what Marc was wearing when he went into the woods. The more he learned the more concerned the officer became.

Officer Beyerle knew that he would need more help so he requested assistance from Carroll County Deputy Sheriff Chip Sawyer. Sawyer had worked with Beyerle on past rescue efforts and he was the closest person to the Inn with the kind of experience that would be needed that night to help find Marc. Sawyer was asked to bring another snow machine, a medical kit, and extra blankets.

After speaking to Sawyer, Officer Beyerle set off immediately on this cold moonlit night with his high speed snowmobile to locate the missing skier.

At the Inn yard he found many tracks. Tracks of grooved skis, smooth skis and several dog tracks. He was looking for the special combination of tracks, the set of smooth racing skis that had dog tracks along with them. Among the maze of tracks and paw prints he found the particular combination that he was looking for and he started to follow their trail as quickly as he could. The trail led him away from the Inn and deeper into the woods.

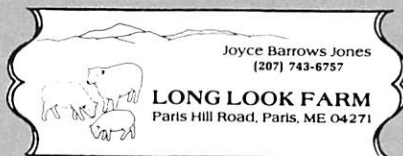
He followed along the tracks that Marc had made earlier that day as he explored a new route for the ski trail which was about a mile and a half from the Inn and then he followed the tracks back onto the main section of the ski trails. The longer he pursued the tracks the less likely Officer Beyerle felt that he would find Marc alive.

Beyerle came to the crest of a hill at about 8:30 p.m. Below him threading its way down through the trees on

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either side was a long icy ski trail. He drove the snow machine down the grade and then he saw it.

It was a tiny spot of blood in the center of the trail.

He brought his snow machine to a stop and with his newly issued radio, that had a better range and assortment of frequencies than he had with his old set, he contacted the Carroll County Sheriff's Dispatcher and asked that the Conway Rescue Squad be alerted and dispatched to assist him. After he completed the transmission Beyerle moved his machine slowly and expertly down the trail seeking for more signs of the missing innkeeper.

What he saw next he described later. "After I saw the first spot of blood I went further down the steep trail. I then saw a tremendous amount of blood. It was as though someone had taken a large pitcher of blood and had poured it along the trail for about thirty or forty yards. When I saw this, I didn't expect to find Marc alive...I expected to find his body."

He went further down the trail and in the flat area at the bottom of the hill he could see dark figures ahead of him in the snow. He drove up to where they were. As he brought his snowmobile to a stop he saw Marc Donaldson lying on the snow raised up on one elbow and waving his hand and arm in the air as though to stop the officer from running over him. Chuska had gotten up from the snow and was barking and jumping up and down between her master and the stopped snowmobile.

Beyerle radioed Deputy Sheriff Sawyer as to his location and a brief description of the victim's condition. He then radioed the Conway Rescue Squad which was just leaving its station as to his location and the best route to follow to get to a location on a roadway nearest to where Marc had been found.

Officer Beyerle then directed his efforts to giving as much aid as he could to Marc. Marc's body temperature was 88 degrees F., he had to eventually have six pints of blood replaced, and his blood pressure had dropped significantly. It was amazing to Officer Beyerle that Marc was still conscious. Marc was very stupor-phoric and in an extreme state of hypothermia. Death was inches away and although Marc had been found he was still in a position of possibly not surviving.

Officer Beyerle cut off all Marc's clothes. His pants were soaked with blood. Those items of clothing that were not soaking wet were frozen solid. He packed a compress into Marc's severe wound and Beyerle took off his own snowmobile suit and put it on Marc.

Deputy Sawyer then arrived and they both wrapped Marc up in blankets.

The Conway Rescue Squad had arrived on the road about one half mile away and Officer Beyerle went with his snowmobile to meet them.

When he arrived at the roadside he was met by Paramedic Frank Hubbell. He returned with Officer Beyerle on the officer's snow machine to the rescue site with a large medical kit.

While Hubbell readied Marc for transport to the roadside Beyerle returned again to the rescue vehicle to bring back the canopied rescue sled and to pack the trail down harder. He also knew that if Marc was jostled on the trip out of the woods he might die because severely hypothermic victims who are banged around go into ventricular fibrillation very easily. So Officer Beyerle stationed the other members of the Rescue Squad along the evacuation trail. They could ease the rescue sled up over the steep and hilly parts of the trail to minimize jostling Marc.

When he returned to where Chip,

Marc, Frank and Chuska were they all readied Marc for his trip over the trail to the rescue squad's ambulance.

The canopied sled was hitched to the high speed snow machine. Frank Hubbell eased Marc into the rescue sled and got in with him to keep Marc's upper body raised to soften the bumps of the trip. Officer Beyerle then closed the canopy of the rescue sled over both of them.

He then got on to his snowmobile and drove them out as smoothly and as quickly as he dared.

The members of the Conway Rescue Squad eased the rescue sled up over the steep spots and within a surprisingly short time Marc was taken out of the rescue sled and placed into the ambulance.

While he was en route to Memorial Hospital in North Conway the Conway Police had relayed more emergency equipment for Marc's use to the Rescue Squad's Ambulance as it was in transit. Officer Beyerle notified the Memorial Hospital about Marc's condition and the estimated time of arrival at the hospital so that the proper hospital facilities and personnel were ready for Marc when he arrived at the Emergency Room entrance.

Chuska remained overnight at the rescue site guarding her master's clothing. She returned to the Inn the following morning by herself.

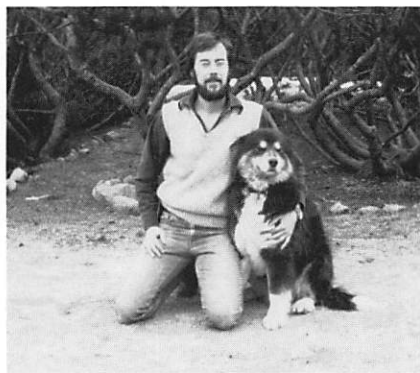
Marc had sustained a six inch deep wound and he was in the intensive care unit of the Memorial Hospital for five days. He stayed in the hospital for five more days and was sent home to recover further. After three days at home, because of healing complications of his wound, he was readmitted to the hospital for two and a half weeks and then he was sent home again for further recuperation. He was unable to work for two months after the accident.

Today he has fully recovered from the effects of the incident and he con-

tinues to manage and run the Darby Field Inn. Chuska still greets every guest.

Officer Beyerle has this advice for skiers. "If you must ski alone always carry a small pack with extra clothing. Tell someone where you are going, and when you will be back. If you have a problem in the woods no matter how minor it may seem to be, you can be in serious trouble."

Speaking about Marc's rescue Officer Beyerle said, "The rescue was a culmination of everything working beautifully. Normally it doesn't. There are mistakes and problems and hang-ups. But in this one everyone did their job to a 'T'. If I couldn't talk to the rescue squad driver, if



Marc Donaldson & Chuska

they had gone to the Darby Field Inn we would have had to go two miles the other way to get him out and he wouldn't have made it... If the rescue squad hadn't showed up with enough people to help me bring him up over the rises, he wouldn't have made it... If the hospital wasn't set up and ready to go when Marc came in, he probably wouldn't have made it... If he hadn't used the dog for a pillow just to keep his head warm and up off of the snow...he wouldn't have made it."

Upon reflection there is no question that Conservation Officer Beyerle, Deputy Sheriff Sawyer, Paramedic Hubbell, the Conway Rescue

Squad, the Conway Police Department and its dispatcher, the Carroll County Sheriff's dispatcher, and the doctors and staff of Memorial Hospital played significant roles in their combined rescue effort that formed the chain that saved Marc's life. They are all to be highly commended for their efforts.

However, Chuska's role in helping to save her master should not be overlooked. It was a combination of her heritage and breeding that caused her to act the way she did.

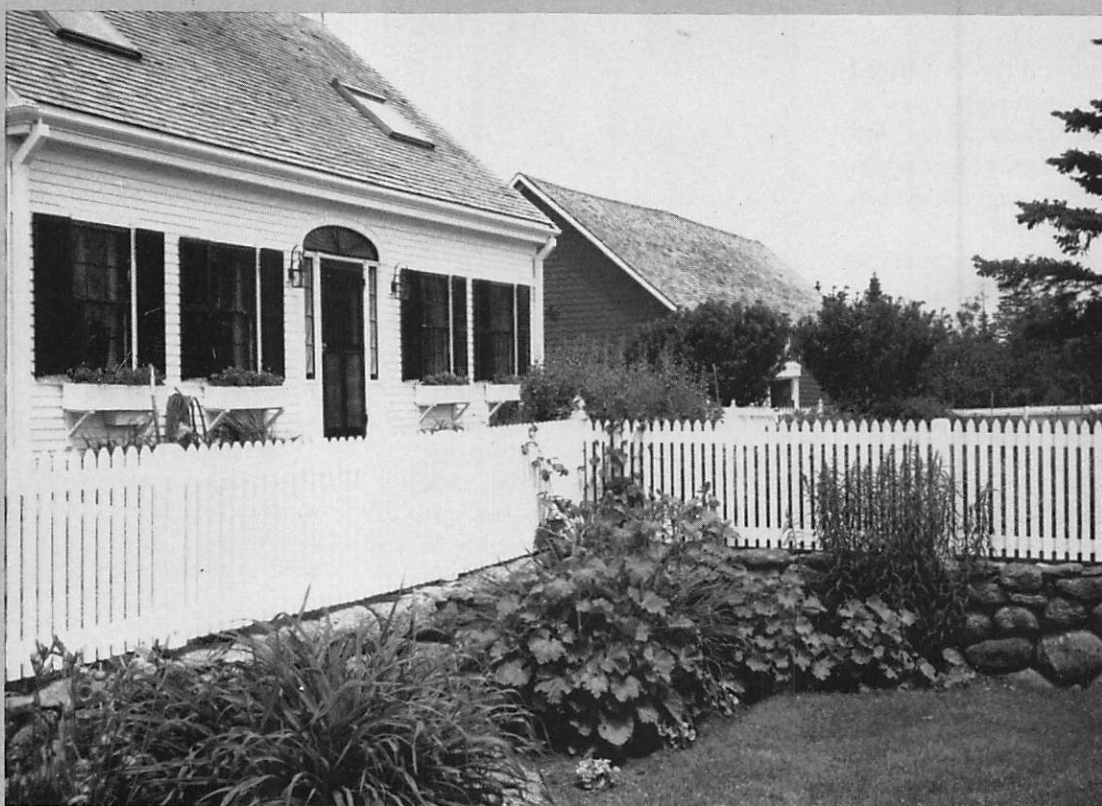
Since history first recorded man's association with dogs the Northern breeds of the Samoyed and Malemute were always cited as being very close companions with their masters. This was because these were two breeds of dogs who were always allowed to sleep indoors with them. Because of this they have always been popular companions. When Marc urged Chuska to "go home" it was against her nature as a Samoyed-Malemute to leave him, because when she was with him she was truly at "home."

This instinct in her and her subservience to him by permitting him to lay his head on her back for several hours was one of the links in the unbroken chain of events that saved her master on February 20, 1983. ■

A FEBRUARY AFTER-STORM

The clearing, melon sky
watches smugly
as whirling
walls of white
stop
the frenzied
work
of man.

*Gertrude Harrington
Augusta, ME*



ROY BARRETTE OF AMEN FARM

by Jack C. Barnes

"I'm Edwardian," says Roy Barrette, the remarkable 87-year-old columnist and author of *A Countryman's Journal*. "I feel much more at home in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than I do in the twentieth."

Roy Barrette and his gracious wife Helen live at Amen Farm in Brooklin, Maine. It is an indescribably beautiful setting altogether befitting a country gentleman who always dresses for dinner, loves flowers, and who above all has a profound reverence for the land.

The Barrettes live on the opposite side of a road less traveled by than most from picturesque Blue Hill Bay. Their house and barn, immaculately maintained, are surrounded by manicured lawns, and a variety of domestic and exotic flowers and shrubs. One can meander for hours at a leisurely pace along stone walks, breathing cool salt air, sniffing the fragrance of flowers, herbs, and freshly cut grass. And, of course, there is a sundial, for, as Roy writes in his *A Countryman's Journal*:

"Sundials belong to gardens. Accurate or not, their presence creates a feeling of tranquility, a sense of timelessness and 'sweet sorrow' that lies at the heart of any true garden."

Beyond the flowers of Amen Farm lies Roy's vegetable garden, which keeps family and friends well supplied with an assortment of fresh vegetables and a surplus to be pre-

served for the long winter months. A high English-style hedge separates the vegetable garden from the broad expanse of a field that extends to where pointed firs and spruce are silhouetted against the sky. The hedge, incidentally, is designed to keep the deer from trespassing in the garden, for Amen Farm and its environs abound in wildlife.





If Amen Farm resembles quite closely the home of an English country gentleman, it is because Roy Barrette—although born in the United States—spent his early years with his grandfather on a farm in rural England. Roy's father was a mining engineer and somewhat of a romantic adventurer. When Roy was four years old, his father went off to South Africa to work for the famous De Beers diamond mining company and spent most of his life traveling around the world.

"My grandfather," Roy comments, "was the principal influence on my life. My father was no influence on me whatsoever. I never saw him. He went his way, and I went mine."

Roy has fond memories of his grandfather and the sixteen years that he lived in England. "When I was a little boy, I liked farming. I also learned how to fish a stream with a dry fly. And, when you went shooting, (I learned) you always broke your gun when you went over a fence."

One day Roy forgot to do the latter, as he records in *A Countryman's Journal*; and his grandfather sent him home in disgrace. Roy never forgot to "break" his gun again.

"The biggest thing I learned as a young man," Roy recalls, "was proper

social behavior. For instance, if you spoke to someone who was a cripple, you never mentioned it; you ignored it completely."

Today's pervading lack of good manners disturbs Roy deeply, and again he writes:

"We do not need to overthrow society to improve man's lot. More can be accomplished by good manners, which are built on consideration for others, than by all the judgments handed down by all the courts of the land. What we need to do is keep the axle greased, not break up the wagon."

Except for taking a few business courses later in life at the University of Pennsylvania, all of Roy's formal education was in England. As he says, "It was a marvelous one."

Like so many rural English lads, Roy was sent for a time to the local rectory. Seldom were there more than five or six boys, and their Church of England rector was usually an Oxford or Cambridge graduate. So poorly paid were the village clergyman at that time that the little extra they could earn teaching a few children often kept them from being virtual paupers.

Roy also attended a public school corresponding to our academies here in the United States. He feels that his

predominantly classical education gave him a solid foundation in life, and he strongly advocates that "Students should have a classical education before they learn the specifics."

It becomes obvious after reading Roy's columns in the *Ellsworth American* or selections from his *A Countryman's Journal* that much of what he writes is impeccable prose at once both poignant and ebullient. Part of Roy's success as a writer is due to his excellent command of the English language. He often rewrites a single column several times until all the rough edges are removed. He feels he owes his command of the language to his days in the English school system.

"The teacher constantly corrected our English regardless of subject. It might be a class in history or geography, but we were made to say things properly." Roy laments that this is not being done more in our schools—he is appalled by the lack of writing skills manifested by many of our young aspiring writers today.

Roy survived the horrors of World War I unscathed both mentally and physically, but a sense of restlessness began to stir within him. Perhaps the sudden urge for adventure was a subconscious legacy from his enigmatic father. Then, too, his elderly grandfather, who was born in 1835, lived just long enough to witness the restoration of a degree of momentary sanity in the world. At any length, Roy turned to the sea as many a young man has done for centuries.

"There was still a lot of sail in those days," Roy recalls. "I remember seeing ten to fifteen sailing ships off New York Harbor at one time."

In the ten years that Roy sailed on sundry kinds of vessels (earning a second mate's license which he still treasures), he accumulated a vast storehouse of sea lore. His many marvelous experiences stimulated

him to write adventure stories for magazines.

One such adventure was on a passenger ship—an ex-German vessel with three 'tween decks—that was on its maiden voyage from Los Angeles to Honolulu. Half-way across, it caught on fire; all hands and nearly five hundred passengers had to take to the lifeboats. For a day and a half, they drifted about—until rescued by a freighter bound for the Orient. Miraculously, not one single life was lost.

It was in 1919, early in Roy's sailing career, that he first came to Maine as a deck hand on a coal barge owned by the Northern Paper Company. Soon after, he made several trips on coastal schooners that docked in Portland.

Roy vividly recalls the morning and the circumstances under which he really discovered and fell in love with the beauty of seacoast Maine. "I was on a schooner; and, being the youngest one on board, I was given the job of greasing the masts. I was hoisted aloft in Casco Bay. The surface of the water was covered with a fog ten feet high. When I got up there, I could see all those little green islands, but I couldn't see the ship which was beneath me. I was up there all by myself like God looking down at the landscape."

After ten adventuresome years at sea, Roy wanted to begin a new chapter in his life. He was fortunate to meet an entrepreneur in Philadelphia who had been a pilot in World War I. With Roy's expertise in the area of transportation, the two joined forces and successfully pioneered the first aviation insurance brokerage company in the United States—later known as Parker and Company International.

Despite the demands that the new and challenging enterprise made upon Roy, vignettes of the Maine coast he had discovered from among

billowing sails lured him away from the bustling city rather frequently. He frequently came back to the quietude of the Pine Tree State.

"I came up whenever I had a little time to spare. Helen and I lived at Sullivan Harbor for a couple of years. I know the state pretty well. Of course, I go back to 1919; and that was before most people around here were born."

Around 1958, Roy purchased the farm in Brooklin. It had been lying neglected for many years, totally without any of the amenities common to today's society. By 1962, the Barrette farm had undergone a tremendous transformation and was ready for occupancy. So Roy retired from a very successful business, and he and Helen (whom he had met and married in Philadelphia) left the City of Brother Love for good to become farmers in Maine. It was Helen who christened their new home "Amen Farm." "This is it!" she exclaimed. And so it has been for the Barrettes for over twenty-two years. As Roy explains in his journal, "We are now past the age of wanting to move or to travel very far."

Roy was at long last returning to a way of life he had known and loved

as a boy on his grandfather's farm in England. "We did not come here to escape anything," Roy explains in *A Countryman's Journal*, "but to find something."

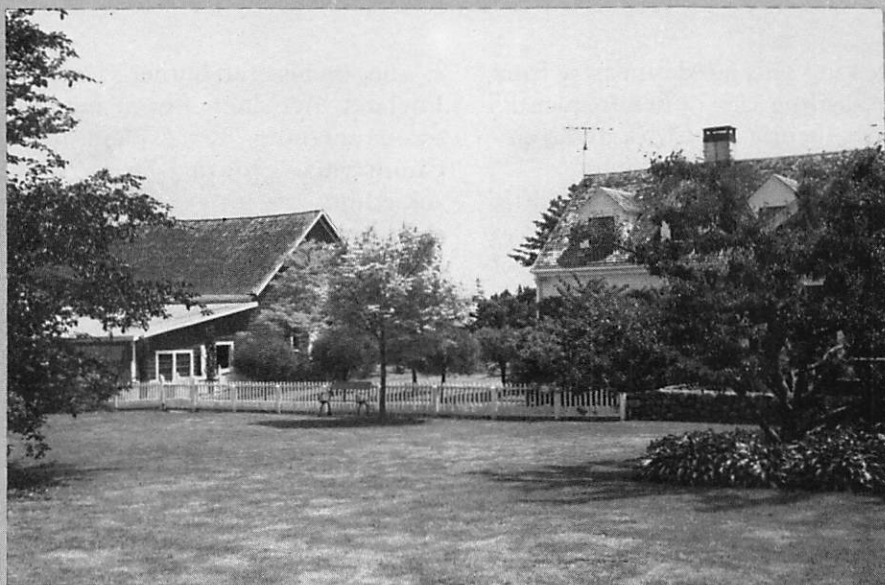
Although Roy has always had other sources of income, Amen Farm was quickly made into a self-sustaining farm. Over the years, he has raised dairy cows, beef cattle, pigs, poultry, vegetables and fruit. In recent years, however, he has limited his farming activities to gardening and maintaining a small flock of hens.

Despite the demands of farm life, Roy Barrette found time for two other loves—books and writing. He has a deep reverence for books—especially old ones—and he has a most impressive library containing between four and five thousand volumes.

"Except for dictionaries, encyclopedias, and the like," he writes in his journal, "I have read all I own, some several times; but I still am unable to resist the temptation of buying more."

Soon after the Barrettes had settled into life on a saltwater farm, Roy began to write a journal in which he recorded daily events, activities, and inspirational thoughts generated from his observations of the gradual





and sometimes sudden transformations of nature as the seasons revolved. His inspirations soon developed into a weekly column that for eighteen years has been featured in the *Ellsworth American*, owned and edited by James Russell Wiggins—former editor of the *Washington Post*—and for fourteen years in the *Berkshire Eagle*. It was basically from these two newspaper columns that he eventually gleaned the material for *A Countryman's Journal*, which was published in 1981 by Rand McNally. He is about to finish a second book to be published by Godine Publishers of Boston.

"It will be somewhat different," he says of his new book, "for no one ever writes exactly the same way twice, but it will be largely made up of columns and articles that I have written."

Whatever Roy has written about in his second book, it certainly will be worth the reading; it will merit a place on any discriminating reader's bookshelf. As to *A Countryman's Journal*, it is a book that one delights in reading and rereading. As Roy says, "I think it is the sort of book that will last."

Roy likes to write. Interestingly enough, he stands to compose on a typewriter in much the same way as

Nathaniel Hawthorne and some other early writers composed with a pen. But he also admits that it is a little more difficult for him to keep up with a weekly column.

"When you get as old as I am, time telescopes. I don't have as many working hours as I did when I was young."

Because Roy has several more books he wants to write, he has begun writing a bimonthly column for the *Ellsworth American*. Besides, as he admits, "Nobody is going to be inspired every Friday for eighteen years—not even in Maine."

Because there are and have been so many artists and writers who, like Roy Barrette, have settled in Maine and have done their best work here, Roy was asked if he thought Maine makes writers or attracts them.

"It attracts them," was his immediate response. "Maine is one of the few places in the country where you can be by yourself. Mainers by and large aren't pushy. We could go weeks here and not see anyone if we didn't want to... It may improve them to the extent that it gives them breathing room to think things through."

The Barrettes maintain a harmonious and reciprocal relationship with their neighbors, including E.B.

White. Roy expresses his pleasure in living where he does (in the tiny town of Brooklin, which does not have more than 600 scattered residents) in *A Countryman's Journal*:

"One of the happiest rewards of living where we do is the knowledge that we are a part of a community. We know that if we were in trouble and able to holler loud enough, we could stand in the middle of the road and yell and in no time half the town would show up to help out."

Brooklin may very well be one of the last places in the United States where people at least partly sustain themselves by bartering and swapping, as Roy goes on to write:

"I suppose that, could they figure how to do it, the I.R.S. would put half of us in jail for swapping goods or services with the other half, but they would be bucking a whole way of life. One of our neighbors is a topflight bread maker, so we swap eggs for bread. My wife said the other day that we were not giving her enough eggs for the amount of bread she was providing us. She replied that she was getting all the eggs she wanted, so what! I suggested that, as a way out, we could increase the price of our eggs until it balanced the price of bread, which amused us both. We also swap a few eggs for scallops in season."

It did not take this author long to ascertain that Roy's neighbors are protective of and respect his privacy. I pulled up at the little general store at the fork in the road and asked the proprietor, "Can you tell me which road leads to Roy Barrette's farm?"

"Do you have business with Mr. Barrette?" the storekeeper asked, pointedly.

"Yes, I have an appointment to interview him."

I got the directions. "You can't miss it 'cause it has 'Amen Farm' written in big letters right across the barn, and there are lots of white

fences around the place," the storekeeper said. "So many people come here wanting to see Mr. Barrette that I always find out if Mr. Barrette wants to see them first before I tell them how to get there."

Helen and Roy are lucky people, with good neighbors. As a writer Roy says, "I feel I have something worth telling the world," and anyone who meets him or reads either the columns or the book written by this remarkable octogenarian will very likely agree. Roy has a message for the world.

"I think the big problem is, and I make a point of it in my writing, that people ignore small daily things and hang around for bigger miracles. They trample on the good things of life."

How beautifully and eloquently he expresses this philosophy in *A Countryman's Journal*.

"I discovered that, even though I had not inherited money, I had been given something far more valuable—an affection for rural life and, best of all, an appreciation of the small, pleasant, daily incidents of life there. Happiness is woven of an accumulation of seemingly trivial events. It is like manna from heaven, fresh every day for the gathering. I learned not to trample it underfoot while searching for more spectacular miracles."

Roy was sitting in a chair surrounded by the books he treasures. Suddenly, with an ancient volume in his hand, he looked up at his wife who was sitting across the room from him, and he smiled.

"I have everything I could ever want right here. I have always been a very happy person."

Jack Barnes teaches at Bonny Eagle High School and the University of Southern Maine.



Photos by Jack Barnes

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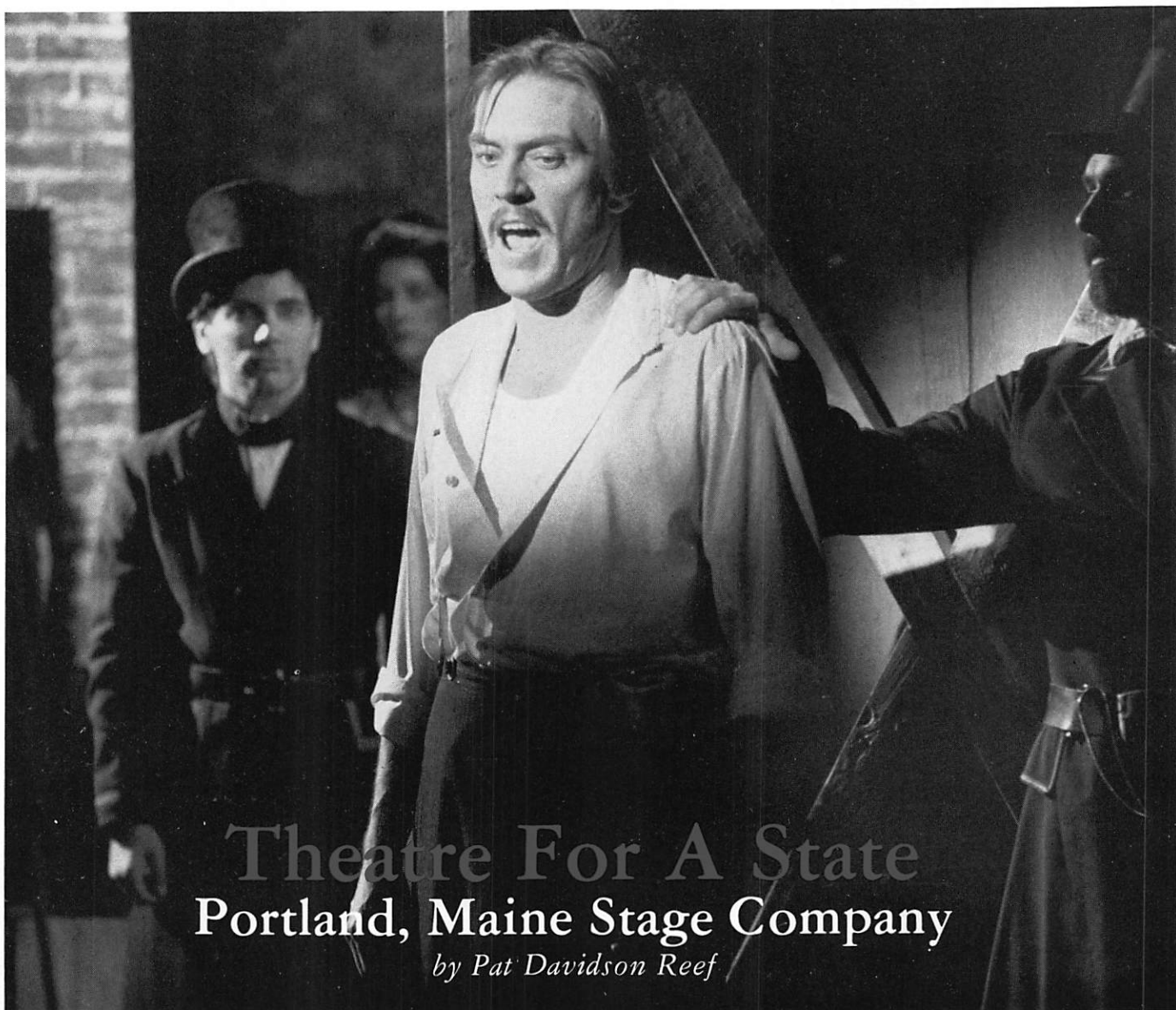
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Scene from "The Threepenny Opera" — (l. to r.) Stephen Sena, Anita Flanagan, John Herzog, Tad Ingram.



Theatre For A State Portland, Maine Stage Company

by Pat Davidson Reef

*"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women
merely players;
They have their exits
and their entrances;
And one man in his time
plays many parts,
His acts being seven stages."*

—Wm. Shakespeare

Looking at Barbara Rosoff, director of the Portland Stage Company, one sees her vibrant and direct personality. With a dominant intellect, with sensitivity and creative taste, she is

developing the taste of Maine audiences.

In a recent interview in her office at the new Performing Arts building on Forest Avenue in Portland, she said that her major goals in bringing live theater to Maine are: "To widen the range of theater quality in Maine, to entertain, educate, and stimulate audiences." Another significant purpose that she sees is the professional theater's role in bringing the community together.

Discussing theater, she pointed out

that it historically grew out of a Greek and Roman religious base. Its purpose was to bring the community together. Barbara Rosoff believes that a major goal of the Portland Stage Company is to bring the community together and present it with basic human issues, selecting a balance between contemporary revivals and new plays by new playwrights.

Her concept of "community" extends to the whole state. She sees the Portland Stage Company as a vital force in Maine, stimulating all the



Barbara Rosoff

arts, but especially those people who are interested in professional theater.

Sitting casually on a couch in her fourth floor office, she said, "Live theater brings together something special." For Barbara, the audience is as much a part of the play as the actors. She related that a work will often change in relationship to an audience. "An audience interacts in a given work, and the way the audience responds colors the response of the actors on stage. Good theater is a union between important ideas, good acting, skillful directing, and a responsive audience." All of the above influence each other and in essence the quality of the parts make up the quality of the whole of a given performance.

Asked if she was pleased with Maine audiences, Barbara Rosoff said, "Yes." She pointed out that the majority of the Portland Stage Company's audience was between 25 and 50, with 86% of their audience college graduates. It's obvious Portland Stage Company appeals to a literate audience.

The Portland Stage Company also

has a very loyal Senior Citizen group which receives special reduced prices every year. In addition, a wide variety of young people are involved with the theater group. Last year, fifteen area high schools were given special matinees on Thursday mornings at ten o'clock in order to meet the needs of the schools in the district while interesting young people in professional theater.

The Portland Stage Company has five year-round professional staff members. On a seasonal basis, their staff extends to 25 members when needed. Out of the twenty-five seasonal staff members, nine people are interns learning different facets of the theater.

The theater provides many related activities for the whole community. For example, the Maine Humanities Council sponsors a Luncheon Lecture Series as well as a film series at the Portland Stage Company. On the first Tuesday of every month after a new performance, there is a lecture in the theater at lunch time. People bring their own brown bag lunches; hot coffee is served. Well-known guest speakers are asked to give lectures on different topics related to the current play. This year the uniting theme was, "What is Family?" Each play was discussed from that standpoint.

The first play, *The Portable Pioneer and Prairie Show* by Mel Marvin, about a Swedish family settling in the midwest in the late 19th century, was discussed at a luncheon lecture by Charles Bassett, chairman of American Studies of Colby College. He was aided by moderator Martin Andrucki, chairman of the theater department of Bates College.

Other speakers scheduled to give lectures during the year are: Ellen Nyhus, psychotherapist and marriage counsellor, speaking on the production of *Goodbye Freddy* by Elizabeth Diggs; Robert Chapman, scholar on

Shaw, speaking on the production of *Misalliance* by George Bernard Shaw; Professor Kathleen Ashley, University of Southern Maine, speaking on the production of the new play *Night Mother* by Marsha Norman; and an Afro-American scholar speaking on the productions of *Cloud 9* by Caryl Churchill, and *A Member of the Wedding* by Carson McCullers.

In addition to the luncheon lecture series, the Portland Stage Company provides a film series in conjunction with its plays of the season. The films this year: *Design for Living*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Imitation of Life* and *The Decline of Western Civilization*.

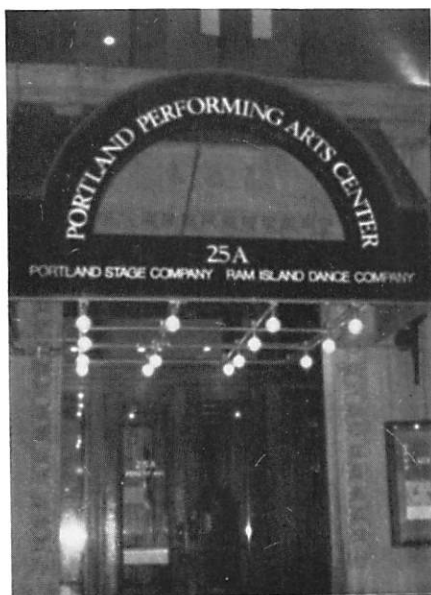
The Portland Stage Company was founded in 1974 as a touring company of young artists. In 1975, they incorporated and formed a board of trustees. Their first home was located in the Lancaster building in Portland near Barridorf Galleries. In 1977, the Portland Stage Company moved to a theater-in-the-round in the nearby Temple Street garage complex. The theater expanded and moved to its present location on Forest Avenue in 1983. The new per-

Mary McDonnell in "The Death Of A Miner"





"Terra Nova" — (l. to r.) Paul Walker, Alan Wasserman, Malcolm Stewart. Photos by Dean Abrahamson



Inset: Pat Reef Photo

forming Arts building is in the center of the city of Portland. They now share this building with the Ram Island dance company.

The Portland Stage Company's season begins in late October and ends in the middle of April. Asked why the Portland Stage Company did not run into summer, Barbara Rosoff said, "May and June tend to be months that are filled with graduations and weddings and other spring functions. We find that the audience gets involved with other seasonal things at that time. So we end our season before the annual spring functions appear."

The reputation of the Portland Stage Company has grown over the years. The theater group has attracted prestigious grants from many im-

portant sources, such as The Maine State Arts and Humanities Commission and The Maine Humanities Council. This year it attracted a major grant from the National Endowment of the Arts in Washington, D.C. This very important recognition is for the high quality of professional theater that it offers the state.

The Portland Stage Company provides a valuable source of intellectual and creative stimulation for Maine. It appeals to all people and to all ages. Barbara Rosoff welcomes people from across the state who are interested in serious professional theater to participate in the company's growth and wide range of activities. ■



Icy Landscapes

Photos by Dalmar MacPherson

HAIKU

Winter's morning sun
pours gold across bare treetops,
rivaling lost leaves.

Leafless trees impose
a fine textured loveliness
upon coral skies.

Charcoal-feathered trees
stir against white winter skies,
betraying birds' nests.

—*Lucille Gripp Mabarry*
Creston, Iowa



Poetry

Photos ppg. 24-29 by Dodo Knight

FEBRUARY 2

The day's birth
comes bristling neath hoar frost.
From her window Anna peers out
through panes riddled with
white, onto rows of appletrees,
asleep in their shell of ice.

The morning glows stainless,
precise in its purity. Massed
close beyond the low stone wall,
sunlight snarled in their branches,
scrub brush sculptured in silver-
dust lay knives on the sky.

The drama! The air delectable
as fresh ice cream! ...and
still...and still, despite
all such seasonal enchantments,
despite old houses
and women at empty windows,
this moment of bleak
New England promise
piddles out—hope
overshadowed.

Six more weeks at least.

*Thomas Feeny
Raleigh, N.C.*

HAIKU

Enveloping Earth
The sky is a blue blanket
Sending us beauty

*David E. LaCombe
Paris Hill, Maine*

STILL STANDING

I can feel the cold down in my bones,
my breath takes frosty form.
People do live in temperate zones,
people do live where it's warm.

Like the birds, I could wing away,
forsake this frigid season,
for once in my life, refuse to stay,
no one would doubt my reason.

No one but me; I'm not a quitter
who'll turn tail and scurry,
When Northern winds grow sharp and
bitter,
frightened by a flurry.

Winter, stronger, more stubborn
than me?

Arrogant hateful old thing!
Do your darndest to beat me, you'll see,
Who'll be standing come Spring.

*Susan Carr
St. Albans, VT*

POCOMOONSHINE A VILLANELLE

The woods are covered with downy
flakes.

Each barren branch is encased by ice.
It is quietly snowing on the lake.

Nothing dares this silence break,
save for a snow-laden branch that creaks
only twice.

The woods are covered with downy
flakes.

The white crystals a fine blanket make.
The peaceful landscape seems to entice.
It is quietly snowing on the lake.

I wish nothing from this scene to take.
Its gentle beauty does by itself suffice.
The woods are covered with downy
flakes.

I only want of these woods a poem
to make.

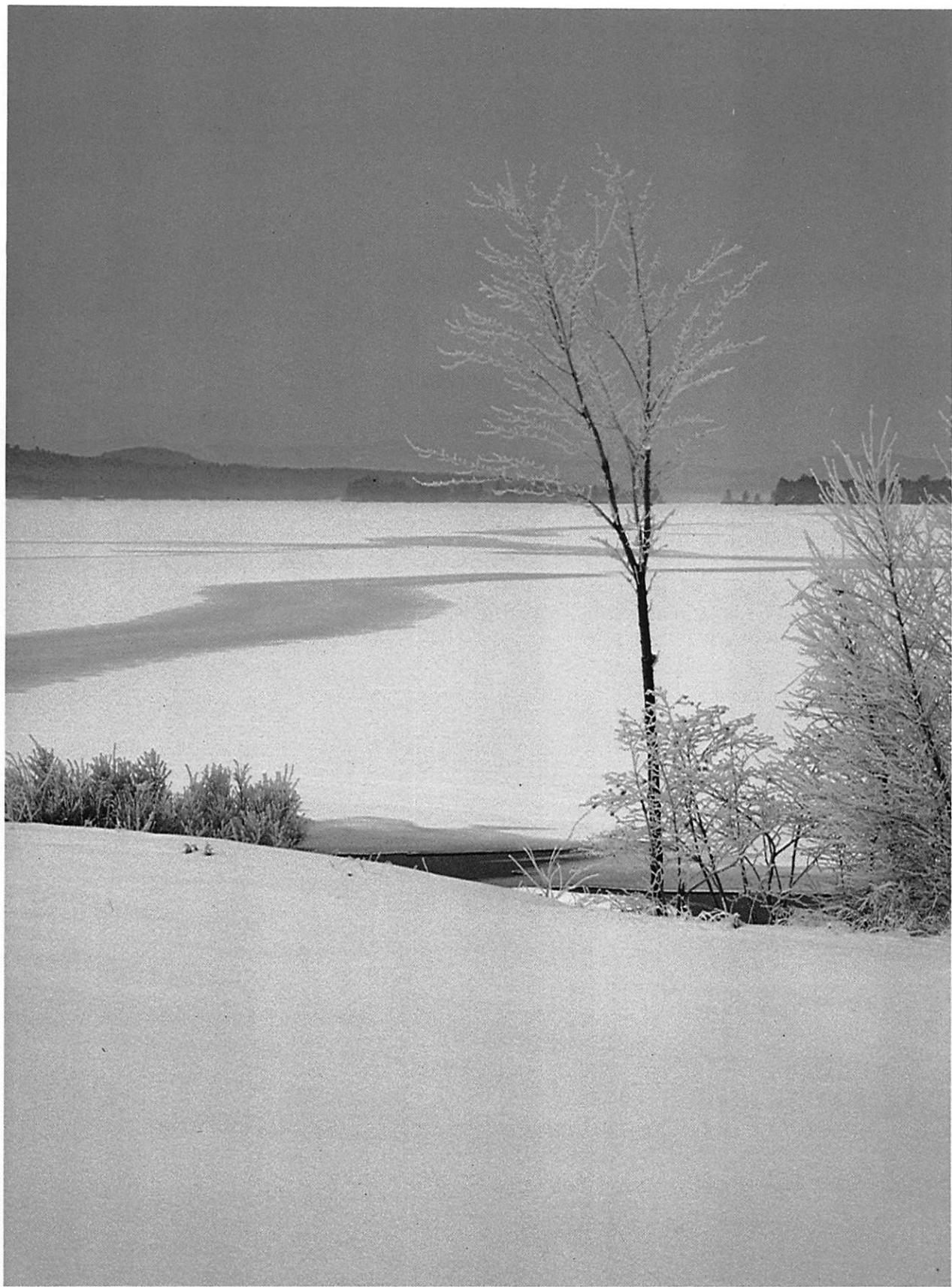
A glistening piece, as if carved in ice.
It is quietly snowing on the lake.

Still nothing does this silence break,
save for a snow-laden branch that creaks
only twice.

The woods are covered with downy
flakes.

It is quietly snowing on the lake.

*Vicki French-Lankarge
South Deerfield, Mass.*



"THE FOREST OF ICE"

Cylinder beads wrapped around trees,
Glass benches connecting trunk to trunk,
Chunky ice marbles to glide and collide,
Roller coaster slides,

Up and down the mainline stream,
over, thru and around trees,
then pause at the meadow's perfect
sized ring;
wide open for hockey and fancy twirlings.

Brown ice,
Green ice,
Blue ice,
Ice with water flowing below;
an underground kingdom inches beyond.
Bouquets of leaves caught in a fall.
Patterns and designs to mystify all.

Mile after mile,
we go down the brook;
ice ribbon arms that holds land common.
With cayenne on our toes, we go on
and on

and on
Just before supper our weary, happy legs
get propped up by the fire with a cup of
hot tea.

We rant on about our adventures with
smiles to match our cheeks.

Then later we take a walk in the quiet,
dark of night,
and stop for a moment, to listen, to the
forest of ice.

We can hear it creak,
jar, rumble, smash, crack.

As we turn back, we're wondering how,
and happy knowing
it's growing more ice.

—Lindy Cady
Ashby, Mass.











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They seemed well satisfied with their result although wondering if their letters were clear enough in regards to autographed maps since there were several of those in addition to two signed cards and the signed block of stamps. They concluded that those who had not sent maps probably did not have any to send.

"We don't have any queens. That sultan with the wonderful name never answered," said Sixteen.

"I've a letter from the lady-in-waiting to the Queen of the Netherlands. Guess that is next best. But I do wish that sultan had replied. He was the only one with that title on the entire list," said Thirteen.

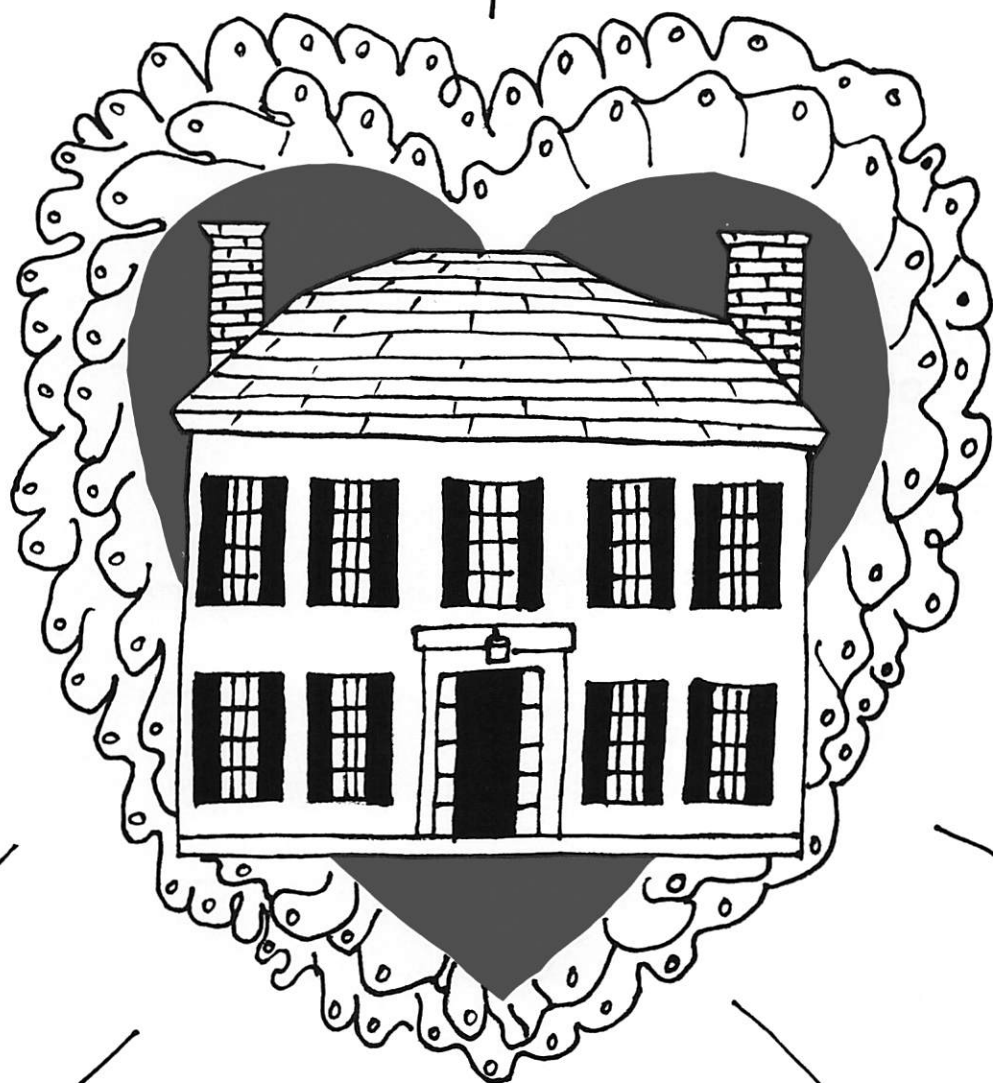
"The sultan may have written in Arabic and we don't know anyone who knows Arabic language. We have been in luck in being able to manage the French, Spanish and German," I said.

Some projects are pure serendipity. This one proved to be. It kept them happily occupied. It kept them in good humor as their mail brightened the day. We all learned a lot as a byproduct but if I had ever mentioned that it could be educational, it probably would have perished before beginning.

There is nothing quite like a good common interest to form a bond for family activities. When my two were grown up and married with families of their own it was sort of an heirloom to our grandchildren when their parents showed their collections to their youngsters. Each of my two had carefully taken his own collection to their new homes as a family treasure.

Edith Goodman lives in Lincoln, Mass. She has written for Woman's Day, Detroit Free Press, and Senior Citizen News, among others.

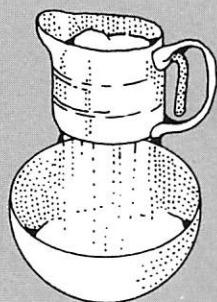
Page 42 . . .



Our Old House

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NLS 1983



Valentine

SWEETS FOR THE SWEET! AN ECLAIRE WITH A "FLAIRE"

by Elizabeth Benson

Who said eclaires, the delectable French dessert, had to be chocolate?

Company was coming, and there was no time to make filling from "scratch" and get it chilled, but eclaires for company would be so good!

"I know, I'll use some instant pudding. Oops, no vanilla! Wonder what pistachio would taste like?... Here's a chocolate pudding, too. We'll be different and make them in reverse—chocolate pudding with white frosting on top and sprinkled with nuts. Fine, but one small package might not be enough.... Hm, *I do wonder* what that pistachio mix would be like? Why not? Let's try it!"

So try it we did. It was just great! Lots of oo's and ah's.

That unlocked the door to creativity. What would butterscotch, orange, lemon, or any other flavor of pudding be like hidden in an eclair shell?

They are all fantastic! Toppings can vary, too, from whipped cream and cherries to icing and nuts to shaved bitter chocolate to complement whatever flavor is secreted inside. The possibilities are endless!

But what about the eclair shells? They're so gooey and messy to shape with a spoon—or fingers! Yes, there's an easier way for that, too.

Use a cookie press or a metal cake decorator tube, or a decorator bag without a tip—just the 1/2-inch hole. Squeeze the dough through it to form a cylinder about 4 inches long, cutting the dough flow with a table knife. They'll be beautiful!

Need a recipe? Fine! Here's the standard one for cream puffs and eclaires as found in most standard cookbooks:

Cream Puff and Eclair Dough

1 cup water 1 cup flour
1/2 cup butter or margarine 4 eggs

Heat oven to 400°. Heat water and butter to rolling boil. Stir in flour and stir rapidly over the heat for about a minute or until the dough forms a ball and no longer clings to the sides of the pan. Remove from heat and cool. Add eggs one at a time, beating each one

in with a spoon until the dough is smooth and satiny. Shape into desired mounds on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake until puffed and golden. Cool. Cut off tops and pull out membranes of soft dough to make the cavity large enough to take the filling. Fill and replace the tops. Finish according to your own best liking for the occasion. They are usually best served chilled.

Variations

- Dough can be shaped round for cream puffs and filled with whipped cream, vanilla pudding or ice cream and the tops dusted with confectioners' sugar.
- Dough can be shaped in cylinders about 4 inches long and filled with pudding with the tops frosted.
- Traditional French chocolate eclaires used a rich vanilla pudding inside and were frosted with a chocolate icing made from the following: 1 ounce melted unsweetened chocolate, one tsp. butter melted, 1 cup confectioners' sugar, and about 2 tablespoons of hot water. Beat until smooth.
- Who said eclair dough had to be used for eclaires at all? Try pressing out little mounds through the tube about as large as a walnut onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake until golden brown and they will hold their shape. Cut off the tops and fill them with egg salad or meat filling. Replace the tops. They can be used as an entree with gravy, or as *hors d'oeuvres* for a party.
- Now experiment a little more by mixing grated sharp cheddar, Roquefort, or Parmesan cheese into the dough. Bake these little cheese puffs as for eclaires. Fill them or not; they add a bit of zest to any meal, party or plain.

Expand your basic eclair with a "flaire" into innumerable tasty treats.

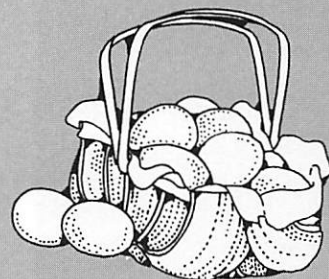
Elizabeth Benson lives in Angwin, California, but some of her best memories are of Woodstock, Maine.



Delights

GESTURES OF LOVE

by Eulalia Benejam Cobb



I stand in my nightgown at the kitchen sink, straining the morning's milk. Then I put the gallon can in the refrigerator to cool, and take out last night's milk to fill the school thermoses.

As I spread peanut butter on homemade whole-wheat bread, my husband dashes down the stairs, gives me a kiss, and is gone. Listening to the sounds of his daily leaving—house door, car door, engine, wheels—I consider that there will be another gallon of milk this evening. The goats are drowning us this year, and the only remedy is to make cheese. The trouble is, I don't know what to do with all the whey. Once I tried a whey punch recipe from the 4-H Club newsletter, but not even the chickens would drink it.

I toss a spotted but wholesome apple from our orchard into each lunch box, snap the lock shut, and run upstairs to get dressed for work. Then I pick up my briefcase, call the children to the car, drive them to school, and kiss them goodbye. At eight fifty-nine I walk into my office and get down to work.

Many hours later I tiptoe out of a meeting on the advantages of a liberal arts education to fetch my daughters. They are standing forlornly at the parent pick-up entrance, the last to be rescued, as always. They pile into the car with cries of "I'm starved. Can we go to McDonald's right now?"

I explain carefully that tonight's

supper—rice and beans—has been simmering in the crock-pot all day, and we head for home. When my husband arrives, I'm at the sink again, this time in my dress-for-success tweeds, straining milk. He picks a cobweb out of my hair and kisses me, and the girls assault him with tales of their day. I open the refrigerator and find it full of gallon cans. There is no room for tonight's bounty. I'll have to start on the cheese tonight.

"What we really need," I say to my family as I hand tankards of milk all around, "is a pig."

"Now look..." my husband begins.

"A pig—yuck!" my daughters squeal.

"Listen just a minute, all of you," I reply, ladling out the rice and beans. "A pig is the logical solution to our goat problem. If we had a pig, we could feed him the milk and whey we don't use, and he would turn it into pork chops. And," I add, turning to my husband, "if you built us a smoke house out of an old refrigerator, like an article I read says you can, we could smoke our own hams."

Silently, my husband bends over his bowl. He's already built nests for the hens, a special feeder for the goats, and a milking stanchion fit for Marie Antoinette. Perhaps the smoke house is too much to ask of a man who would just as soon eat his hams—and everything else—out of a can.

While he washes dishes, I crawl upstairs and settle down with a copy

of *The Mother Earth News*. I can barely stay awake—my days leave me as empty as a goat's udder after milking. Halfway through an article on making long johns out of old sweaters my younger daughter walks in, snuggles into my lap, and asks me to read her a chapter from *Little House on the Prairie*.

So I read about Ma and Pa and Mary and Laura, about their struggles, their hopes, and about the baking and the scouring, the cooking and the milking, the plowing and the fiddling: all the day-to-day rituals of love and courage. My daughter listens, enchanted, and we are both transported to an age of peace, when there was time enough to gaze at the blossoming prairie, on the way home from the fields.

As my daughter, sated with stories and mother love, staggers off to bed, I reflect that, with millions of other women, I too am a pioneer of a kind, trying to stake out a claim to family, work, and happiness in an uncharted land with few neighbors and little time. How to get it right the first time, without losing children or spouse to the Indians?

A soft spring rain patters at the window as I undress. Even though the freezer is still full of last year's crops, it's time to start thinking about the garden. That's the problem with gardens. Like goats, they tend to get out of hand.

But I think I've found the solution to that problem too: rabbits. Accord-

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peace be with you

ing to Extension Service bulletins I have read, rabbit meat affords high-grade protein with very little cholesterol: just the thing to keep my husband's arteries in their pristine state, and the girls can play with the bunnies. I see myself in calico, sickle in hand, cutting grass for my nursing does while my daughters refill the water dishes and my husband tans the rabbit pelts, the four of us aglow with happiness and health.

As the pelt tanner gets ready for bed, I tell him my plans. "You're crazy," he says.

"What do you mean?" I ask. "Don't you realize that we have the potential of growing high-quality protein right here in our own backyard?" Sometimes his blindness astounds me. "Rabbits eat garden leftovers and grass, and give meat in return—for free! All we need is for you to make some hutches."

"You're insane," he persists, getting into bed.

"Look, all we need is a buck and a doe in a couple of hutches, and we'll be totally self-sufficient as far as food goes."

"So what?" he inquires.

"So what? So in case of disaster—a nuclear holocaust, for instance—we'll be all right. We'll have our own fruit, our veggies, milk and eggs. All we lack so far is meat, and the rabbits will give us that."

"If there is a nuclear holocaust we're not going to feel much like sitting down to rabbit cacciatore," he observes.

"What if there's another oil embargo? A cattle plague? An electric failure that melts all the freezers in the East coast?"

"Well, I don't know," he says. "Next you'll be wanting to spin your own flax. Don't you have enough on your hands already?"

That one always gets me. True, there are days when the goats come down with pink eye and the chickens

break the eggs and I discover a pile of ungraded exams aging right next to the cheeses. Days when I am overcome by the desire to move to a condominium, hire a housekeeper, and spend my life going to foreign films.

But soon I return to my old obsessions. I guess I'm gambling, betting that a child munching on a piece of homemade bread won't resent a mother who's shut herself in the bedroom to write a paper. I'm hoping that a lapful of bunnies will help a third grader forget that she ate alone on School Lunch Week because both her parents were at work. And I'm keeping my fingers crossed that a husband nourished on homemade cheese will not succumb to the roving eye.

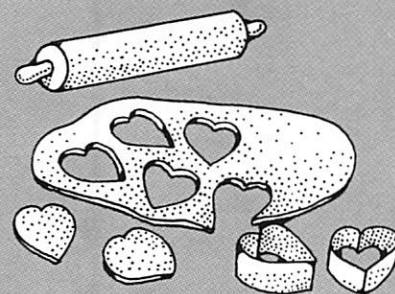
At the thought of cheese, I jump out of bed. "Where are you going?" my husband wants to know.

"I forgot to make the cheese."

He turns to me, holds out his hand. "Please, goat lady," he says, "take a break. Forget the cheese. Just come back to bed."

I get back under the quilts, pushing aside thoughts of soured milk. And as I put my arms around him it occurs to me that *not* making goat's milk cheese can also be a gesture of love.

Eulalia Cobb has written for Redbook and Working Mother, among other publications. She lives in Westminster, Maryland.





Love Tokens — A Valentine Through the Centuries

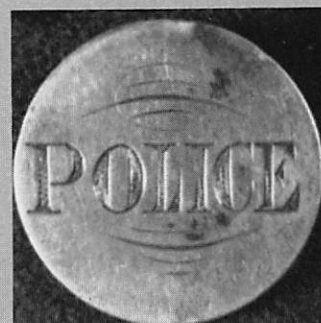


Love tokens—the very name conjures up scenes of romance; lovers separated by time and circumstance; symbols of new affection. And so they were, once humble silver or gold coins, buffed and polished and newly-engraved with ornate initials or statements of patriotism and passion, in complete disregard for federal laws about defacing public property.

Love tokens, as shared with us by Mr. Archie Taylor of Portland, were until recently disdained by numismatists as not being worthy of inclusion in coin collections. They are now being recognized as unique art forms, probably first scratched out by prisoners, soldiers, sailors, or others forced to be away from home and dear ones.

They have passed in and out of vogue, once being purchased by young couples during romantic walks on the boardwalk or visits to the county fair. Love tokens were then found on pendants, bracelets, watch fobs and buttons. In this age of sadly casual relationships, we value them also for their confirming statement of lasting love and affection.

N.M.

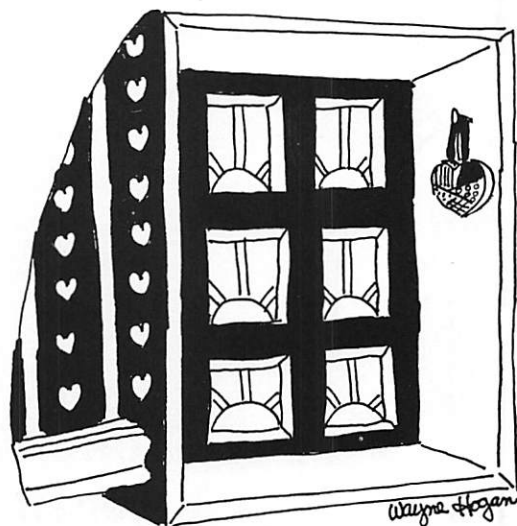


NEW HAMPSHIRE PEOPLE ARE "BETTER-NATURED"

by Francis X. Holt

Just about everybody in the East knows about New Hampshire's majestic mountains, picturesque lakes, spectacular skiing, and low liquor prices. This is due largely to the state itself having spent annually increasing amounts for the promotion of its natural assets and tourist attractions. I can remember many a hot and noisy New York City evening when the routine re-runs on the local independent TV stations were interrupted by very professional promotional spots extolling the virtues of the Lakes Region and the White Mountains. I always felt a pang of envy when Mt. Washington's awesome profile was interjected among the local news accounts of the various bits of mayhem which comprise life in The Big Apple. A permanent cure for these pangs was effected by hiring a moving van and heading north.

Now, I certainly do not want to denigrate the beauty and splendor which characterize so much of the Granite State. However, there is something more to knowing New Hampshire. Something which is often overshadowed by the picture postcards and the bumper-stickers; but is nonetheless the single most influential factor in determining the quality of life here: New Hampshire people. It has yet to be determined how much of a positive effect the surroundings have on the people; but, rather than argue about the chicken and the egg (Does the beauty enhance the people or do the people work to preserve the beauty?), I'd rather share with you a different view of New Hampshire. A different angle often is needed to appreciate the "little things" which truly mean a lot. Believe me, a perspective honed in New York City equips one quite fully to be grateful for life in



New Hampshire.

Perhaps I should have taken a clue from the performance of our moving men. These three gentlemen came from Gorham, Maine; which practically made them neighbors. It was our good fortune that they and their huge truck were on their way north at the same time we were. Working on the hottest weekend of the year, these fellows continually addressed me as "Sir" and took the utmost care with all of our belongings. My previous move had been for a total of eight miles. My New York City movers broke several items ("Yeah, we broke it; but it was old and heavy."); and stopped to visit a friend on the trip across Staten Island. Our Yankee movers were a pleasant change and a preview of our New Hampshire experience.

Three days after arriving in New Hampshire, I developed a throbbing toothache which failed to respond to any of the drugs in our medicine cabinet. I had to find a good dentist quickly. After a few questions around town and a phone call, I secured an appointment for the following morning. My biggest task then became getting through the night with the left side of my face pulsing like a radar beacon. Ice packs and bourbon saw me through to my 8:00 a.m. appointment. I must have looked as bad as I

felt, because the dentist's wife—his receptionist—asked why I hadn't called sooner. I explained that I had called only yesterday; and *she* explained that she meant calling again yesterday. I explained that the pain had really peaked well after office hours; and *she* explained that she meant to call them at home ("We're in the book"), so that they could come into the office and help me.

I was astounded! Call a dentist at home? I had yet to meet this man; and his wife—very logically—wanted to know why I had endured a night of pain, rather than call them at home. In New York City, you have a better chance of getting a call through to the Pope than you do of contacting your dentist's *office*. As far as his home went, well, that sort of thing just wasn't even considered. I was so conditioned to the unavailability of dentists, that I literally suffered all night rather than even admit into the realm of conscious thought the idea of calling a dentist at his home.

The shocks were to continue. When I registered our car (For some reason, I just did not feel like an official resident until my license plates bore the legend, "Live Free or Die." After I put them on the car, the entire family came out to look at them.), I got this flimsy piece of paper they called an auto registra-

tion. In New York, the auto registration is a heavy stock two-part form which is usually split between husband and wife—either half proves ownership. Since the New Hampshire Department of Motor Vehicles had given me only one piece of paper, I inquired if there was more to this, or did my wife and I continually pass this little piece of paper back and forth whenever one or the other of us used the car? The folks at DMV looked at me with a cross between confusion at the question and pity at my apparent inability to comprehend the obvious. "What you do," they said to me very slowly so that I could understand it, "is keep the registration in the car. That way, it's already there when anyone drives it. See?"

Leave the registration in the car! Why, in New York City, I knew people who wouldn't leave even the battery in the car. I explained that, in New York City, if you left anything in an automobile for more than ten minutes, it would be stolen as sure as God made Tuesday. "We don't have much of that here."

Oh. This is hard to assimilate. I mean truly difficult. Little by little, it is becoming evident that what were once highly regarded as survival skills in the big city are not needed here.

My town provides electricity through a Municipal Electric Department. My first bill asked for a small deposit; and had a handwritten note at the bottom: "Thanks a lot." Thanks a lot! When did Con Edison—which, by the way, wanted a deposit large enough to buy a small sub-station—when did Con Edison ever, in all those years, say, "Thanks a lot?" They didn't even pay for the frozen foods melted in the various blackouts.

My newly-found auto mechanic has worked on both of our cars. Some small stuff: inspection, lamps and such. Some larger stuff: fuel

pump, brakes, hoses, etc. In addition to giving a lucid explanation of the services rendered (My New York mechanic sounded like a tobacco auctioneer with poorly fitted dentures), this gentleman has also failed to bill me! "I'll get to it," he says. My lifetime experience with auto repair was that you did not get your keys back until your plastic card was computer-cleared. In fact, if they suspected that you had a second set of keys and would attempt to recover your vehicle under cover of darkness, they would either surround your car with other vehicles and garbage dumpsters; or they would put it up on the lift overnight and leave it there.

A young man came to our house to install and clean some carpet. He worked diligently all morning: cutting, lifting, tacking, stretching. At the end of the job, I took out my checkbook and asked what we owed. "Gee, I don't know," he said, "The boss didn't say. Don't worry, he'll probably send you a bill."

It was slowly dawning on me that a certain amount of civility had been missing from the day to day dealings in my life. The final lesson, however, came at the bank. In New York, you need to make regular six-figure deposits in order to elicit the beginnings of a condescending smile from the teller. Bank officers are available to members of the board of Fortune 500 companies; and votive candles and incense constantly burn outside the office of the bank president. When I opened a new account in a New Hampshire bank (and with a whole lot less than six figures, I can assure you!), the manager showed me pictures of her kids, told me where to shop for the best food buys, praised the local schools, and—to me, incredibly—introduced me to a gentleman who happened to be passing her office: the president of the bank. "Oh, Mr. So-and-So, this is

Mr. Holt. He's a new depositor."

Although these experiences originally left me dumfounded, what has me wondering now is how I ever survived in New York as long as I did! When I mention to people that I have a forty-five minute commute to work, they express concern about such a long ride. They don't understand that I would often spend that much time in a tunnel underneath the East River. Forty-five minutes driving through the pines is like heaven! The best part of all, though, is the people. Don't believe the rumors that the president of the local newcomer's club has held the position for twenty years. The people are friendly; and, even those folks who have never lived anywhere else still appreciate what they have in the Granite State. The state itself may be "better-natured" or whatever (scenic, etc.); but New Hampshire people are tops. To find such people in such a place engenders more hope than New York could ever engender despair. I've made a note to myself to remember this whenever I get so busy working, paying bills, etc. that I never forget to see the people around me. Sometimes, you "can't see the forest for the trees." In New Hampshire, if you look a little closer, you can see some great people among the trees.

Wolfeboro, N.H. is Francis Holt's residence.

THE FARM

by Ethelyn Nye Pinkham

It was the place I loved most to visit, and did so as often as possible. I enjoyed all the animals, and the fresh vegetables, the milk and cream were a delight to me; I had grown up on a Light-house Station three miles out to sea, where our vegetables



were almost wholly of the canned varieties, our milk always either evaporated or condensed, our meats had to be heavily salted or smoked to preserve them. At the farm, after the butchering had been done, there would be that fresh roast of pork for

dinner, warm minced pie for breakfast and, any time of year, Aunt Angie's molasses cookies and hot biscuits.

Gram would tell such interesting stories, about her childhood there on the farm where she was born and

had always lived. She told me of her two little sisters, ages three and five, dying the same day; her brother of seven the following day—all of diphtheria. She liked to remember her mother telling her that they moved into the new house from the old log cabin the day before she was born; the log cabin had been built by her great-great grandfather, she was five when her father took it down.

Gram knew how to make the cooling ginger tea to take to the men in the hayfields and the soothing hand lotion from the buds of the Balm of Gilead tree which grew in the yard near the house. Gram knew a life of hard work, but she lived to the age of 99, dying in the room where she was born.

It was my husband's Uncle David Stinson who now worked the farm; he was the 6th generation of Stinsons to live on and work the farm. It had begun as one of the first farms on the island of Arrowsic, Maine, in 1742. Now it was a farm of 375 acres. Uncle Dave was up by 4 a.m. and worked many days until 7 at night. He sheared his own sheep, shod his horses, milked 10 cows night and morning.

He was a gentle man—I never heard him speak a harsh word to a person or an animal and there was always a trace of a smile on his face. Always in my memory is the day the bull attacked him. While he was leading the bull out for watering, the wooden stick that governs the nose ring snapped, leaving him at the mercy of the bull—who soon realized his freedom and commenced charging. It became a game of fence-jumping between man and beast. As soon as the man jumped over the fence, the bull followed; this jumping went on for several minutes, until it was noticed from the house. Gram, seeing what was happening,



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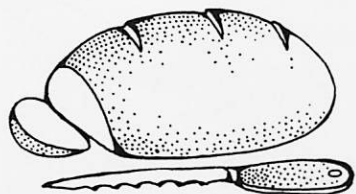
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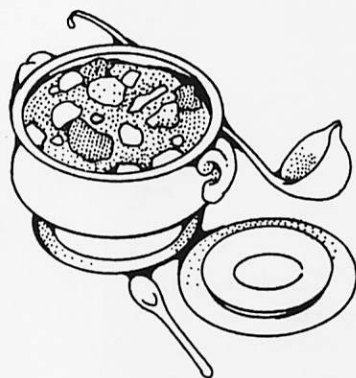
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Homemade



RAGOUT: WARMING STEW

by Beatrice H. Comas



The word "ragout," defined as a thick, highly spiced stew, derives from the French "ragouter," to revive the appetite. It was a dish much favored in the Middle Ages and an ancient recipe for it requires that eels, mushroom ketchup, salt, pepper and nutmeg be cooked for 10 minutes at which time were added a cup of white stock, 6 mushrooms, a dozen oysters, 6 forcemeat balls of fish, chicken or veal and 6 shrimps, all cooked. After this mixture came to a boil, the beaten yolks of 2 eggs were added to it. Unfortunately, the ragout sometimes became a fatal dish for those whose enemies wished to eliminate them. It was easy to introduce poisons to such a highly spiced stew but we need no longer be concerned with that unpleasant connotation.

Stew is still a universal favorite and ten years ago when U.N. officials checked on national dishes, of the 70 nations polled, 40 listed stew in one form or another as their favorite.

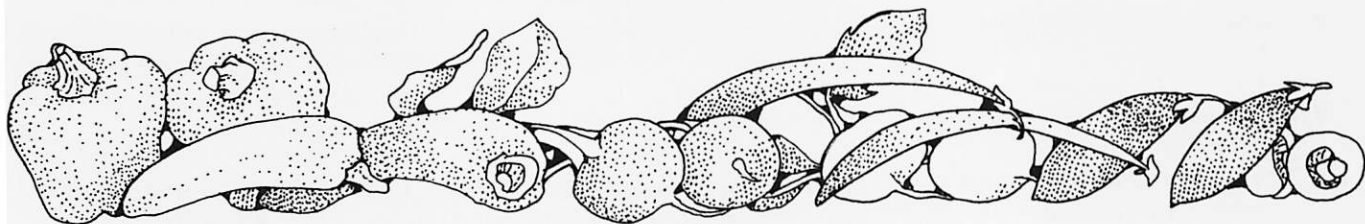
Lamb, veal, pork, chicken, beef and game can be the main ingredient in a ragout, or as in this one, particularly suited to winter dining, boneless, lean pork cubes are simmered in a hearty tomato sauce with a variety of vegetables.

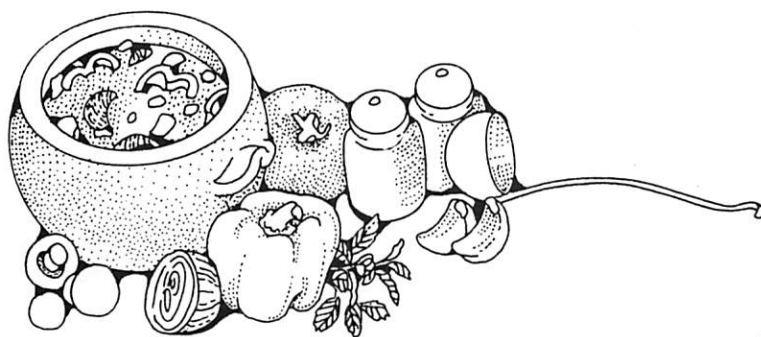
Pork Ragout

2 tablespoons salad oil
1 large onion, sliced

1½ pound pork pieces, cut into 1-inch chunks
1 16-ounce can tomatoes
1/2 cup water
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon thyme leaves
1/4 teaspoon pepper
4 medium carrots
1 10-ounce container Brussels sprouts or 1 10-ounce package frozen Brussels sprouts
1/4 pound fresh medium-size mushrooms

In 5-quart Dutch oven or saucepot over medium heat, cook onion in hot salad oil until tender, stirring occasionally. With slotted spoon, remove onion to plate. Set plate aside. In drippings remaining in Dutch oven, cook pork pieces over medium-high heat until browned on all sides. Stir in onions, tomatoes, with their liquid, and next 4 ingredients. Heat to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, cut carrots into 2-inch chunks. If Brussels sprouts are large, cut each in half. Add carrots to mixture in Dutch oven. Continue cooking 15 minutes. Add mushrooms and Brussels sprouts. Cook 25 minutes longer or until vegetables and pork are tender, stirring occasionally. Skim off fat from liquid in Dutch oven. Discard bay leaf. Serves 6.





Lamb Ragout

- 2 pounds boned, lean lamb,
cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons shortening or lard
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 3 potatoes, peeled, and cut into
thick slices
- 2 cups sliced onions
- 1/2 cup milk or light cream

Dredge lamb in flour mixed with salt and pepper. In Dutch oven or heavy saucepan with tight-fitting cover, brown lamb in shortening, adding remaining flour mixture toward end of browning time. Drain off excess fat. Add chicken broth, thyme and allspice, then cover and simmer for about 1 hour. Add potatoes and onions. Re-cover and simmer for 1/2 hour, or until lamb and potatoes are tender. Stir in milk or cream and reheat to serving temperature. Add more salt and pepper to taste, if desired. Serves 4 to 6.

Tuna-Vegetable Ragout

- 1 10-ounce can tomato-
vegetable soup
- 1 cup water
- 1 6-ounce can spicy-seasoned
tomato juice
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/8 teaspoon poultry seasoning
(or dried sage or thyme)
- 1 7-ounce can solid white meat
tuna, water-packed,
undrained

Combine all ingredients except tuna. Heat to boiling. Lower heat to simmer. Add tuna, including liquid. Heat through. Serves 2.

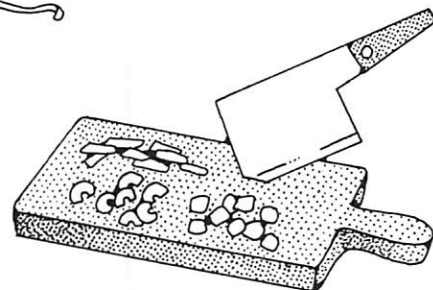
Fifteen Minute Onion Ragout

- 1 1/2 cups coarsely chopped onions
- 3 tablespoons bacon, ham or
meat drippings
- 2 green peppers, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups fresh tomatoes,
chopped
- 1/4 cup prepared bouillon
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 teaspoon chopped parsley
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste

Saute onions with green peppers in drippings until soft. Stir in tomatoes, bouillon, bay leaf, parsley, thyme, salt and pepper. Bring slowly to a boil. Simmer very gently about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. If desired, sprinkle with grated cheese. Serves 2 to 3.

Veal Ragout

- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
- 1 tablespoon salad oil
- 1 1/2 pounds veal shoulder, cut
into 1 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram
leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 13 1/4-ounce can chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups carrot, sliced thinly on
the diagonal



- 1 cup celery, sliced thinly on the
diagonal
- 3 medium potatoes, pared and
quartered
- 1 10-ounce package frozen peas,
thawed
- Chopped parsley

In a 5-quart Dutch oven, over medium heat, heat butter and oil. Add veal cubes (half at a time). Cook over medium heat until cubes are well browned on all sides. As they brown, remove to a bowl. (This will take about 15 minutes.)

Return meat to Dutch oven. Add garlic, marjoram, salt and pepper, stirring until well blended with meat.

Sprinkle flour over meat, stirring until well blended.

Gradually stir in chicken broth. Bring to a boil, stirring. Reduce heat. Simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, 1 hour.

Add carrot, celery and potato. Simmer, covered, about 20 to 25 minutes, or until vegetables are almost tender.

Add frozen peas. Simmer, covered, 10 minutes, or until meat and vegetables are tender. Sprinkle with parsley. Serves 6. ■

Beatrice Comas, of South Portland, Maine, writes regularly.



*The Old Stinson Farm
Arrowsic, Maine*

rushed out with the old gun that always stood just inside the shed door; but it was old Ned that saved the man.

The horses had also been turned out in the yard and, soon sensing something wrong, became greatly excited by all the commotion. Ned, with hoofs flying, raced by. One hoof struck the bull, causing him to forget his victim for just a second—just long enough for the shot to be fired that ended the battle. The creature was dead, the man completely exhausted.

Uncle Dave's health would never be the same again—he would always be lame. Just a few years later, having lost both Gram and Aunt Angie, and with no male heirs to carry on, the time came that the farm must be sold. So, after having been in the same family for over 200 years, it would change hands. It was sad for all of us, but we still have our pleasant memories of the good times at the farm. ■

Ethelyn Nye Pinkham lives in Bath, Maine. The farm is in Arrowsic.

... Old Man's Journey

certain his strength and stamina remained unsapped. Perhaps he slipped on the greasy deck; at any rate, he suddenly found himself looking into the great deep vault above, a void of utter blackness except for dots of tiny sparkles. His wind had left him, yet he knew a kind of comfort and peace transcending the agony of aching muscles. He lay back, confused, to let himself die there or be borne away, whatever came to pass.

And in that spot they discovered him. It was still dark when he awakened to a babble of sounds. Shapes moved in and out of his vision, blotting the stars, distorted among darting lights. The forms possessed voices which spoke of him, and occasionally to him with soothing words of comfort.

"It's him all right," he heard a man say, "believe it or not. How did he get way down here?"

A lovely white apparition hovered over him, her voice soft and her

breath sweet. "Andrew, you'll be just fine," she said, holding his hand. "Dear, dear...", she added, teary and faltering. She brushed wisps of hair from his eyes, then pressed her palm against his forehead.

"I must get to my ship," he explained, trying to upraise himself. "Down there's the harbor...I must get to my ship!"

"No, no, we'll go on home," said the girl. "Just rest here and you'll be fine, Andrew."

The men rolling the stretcher toward him spoke in low tones, yet he heard.

"Thinks there's water down there, don't he?"

"Yeah," came the reply. "Must be at least a hundred miles to the nearest ocean from here...." ■

Stewart Goodwin is an English teacher at Mount Blue High School in Farmington, Maine. His stories have been published in The Antioch Review and Kennebec.

morning boy

Off to their jobs they've gone
my men
fed and kissed out the door

and the winter morning
drapes itself
dark and cozy
over this little house

and I
cross-legged
jeaned and sweated
coffee'd and toast'd
sit on the warm and scrambled bed
trying to write a poem

distracted
boggled
my brain a mass of strings
pulled and tugged
toward the thin door
from which come sounds
of Andre's sing-singing
early morning
cot rocking
hair tangling
giggling
monologue-ing
wet-pajama'd
reverie

and it occurs to me
in a rush of joy and surprise
(as if I had just seen the winter sun)
breaking through the sky over the lake)
that the distraction
is
the
poem.

winternight

When the dark is outside covering up
the snow
but it's not yet late
and here in the woodwarmed room
you are sitting on the cot
with your face turned at that angle
toward the guitar you're playing

and your fingers are moving
swiftly as hummingbirds
over the strings

and your mouth
looking young and sweet
is singing its soft song

then I find myself blessing
the lamplight
and the hour of the day

and I sit like a prayer waiting to be said

marking the rosary of
your mouth, your hands, the angle of
your face
the aureole of your dark hair

then I begin again.





Art by Sara Gallant

blue silk kimono

The water was used up this morning
except for what was in the kettle
so I poured that in a tin bowl
and washed my blue silk kimono

then carried it in its basin
Masai-fashion
on my hip
down to the stream out back

where I rinsed it
over and over again
in the cold rushing water
as my sneakers sank deep into the mud
and my fingers grew numb.

My city-folk call and say
How can you stand it there?
How can you stand not having running
water?

I smile at that
but they cannot see the smile.

How can I explain
what it is
to walk in the cold sweet air
through the woods of this old worn
mountain
to my brook
at 6:45 in the morning

hear its voices rush to greet me
and lower into its waters
my Chinese kimono
of blue silk.

Even the dragon looks blissful.

*Patricia White
Otisfield, Maine*

View Askew

by Robert Skoglund

THE EDUCATIONAL PARTY

I'm standing in the 10-items-or-less line with a can of sardines and some crackers when who do I notice in front of me with a whole case of potato chips but Frank Tweed, the ragtime piano player.

So I say, "Hello Frank," and then I shout it two or three times because he's hugging his potato chips and doesn't notice me until I rap him right smart on the elbow with my sardines which aren't really mine because we're still in line and I haven't paid for them yet.

Frank rubs his elbow and then looks over his shoulder and seems to be real surprised to see me standing there. "Oh, it's you," he says. And I talk about the weather until at last he pries out of me that Reeney's gone back to live with her parents because she can't afford to put herself through the Community College and buy my groceries too. And although I never thought Frank Tweed was a nosey fellow, he also finds out that my cupboard is bare. But I tell him that I'm speaking at the Chamber of Commerce banquet the next evening which will give me enough cash to keep me in spaghetti for a month. And Frank says, "Are you sure you're speaking at that banquet tomorrow night?" And I says, "Just as sure as I'm going to have these crackers and sardines for my supper." And he says, "That's too bad, because I'm having a party for young singles tomorrow night and I sure wish you could be there."

By then we are up to the cashier so Frank peels a five off a roll like it was nothing and pays for his potato chips and leaves. I get digging in my

pockets and all of a sudden I remember that I spent my two dollars the day before over at Wasses Hog Dog Wagon, so I have to put the crackers and sardines back on the shelf.

The next night I'm dressed in my best and I'm over at the place where I'm to speak at the banquet, but the man behind the desk says I'm a week early.

So I show up at Frank's party after all and is he surprised. I tell him that I parked out by the road instead of on his lawn like everyone else because my gas tank leaks, and I see from the expression on his face that he is grateful.

I know the best way to meet people at a party is to stand still in one place. Sooner or later everyone goes by because they're looking in all the corners to see who's got a divorce since the last one.

The first hour I talk with a flute player who is having trouble with her shoulder straps, a sculptor who is going to be very famous and a marriage counselor who has a filing cabinet full of confessions from most of us there.

Then I overhear a man telling the flute player that some nut wants to extend the school year as much as 40 days, so I strain my ears and edge over where I can hear better.

"The problem with education today is not mediocrity," he says, "but attempting to educate people beyond their ability. Years ago if you had a struggle in school you gracefully dropped out and went into a business where you could succeed with your God-given talents. But today children are encouraged to stay in school although perhaps they cannot learn or are so uncomfortable in classroom situations that they refuse to learn. Most of a teacher's grief comes from this small group of students and their frustrated parents. Too much of every teacher's time and energy is wasted in dealing with trouble makers. It cheats the students who can learn and who want to learn. Now we

think we can catch up with Japan and Europe by ignoring our real problem. We're thinking of extending the school year or making the school day longer instead. But school vacations have evolved because they are needed by both students and teachers. If you doubt it, teach for a year or two."

The flute player says, "Why don't they . . .?"

"Anything a teacher could do that would be effective would rock the boat," says the man. "Wallop the trouble makers and you get parents threatening to sue. Send kids home and the whole system comes down on you and questions your ability to teach. The trouble makers are protected by our present system. Oh, teachers care. But they've learned that an orderly, efficient classroom where average hardworking students can learn is not worth fighting for. You get a couple of irate parents or the superintendent yaking at you so you give up and slide along with the system. I'm counting the years until my retirement."

The flute player says, "Where do you teach?"

"Why I haven't dared go in a classroom for 12 years," the man says. "I'm the superintendent."

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Robert Skoglund writes from his home at "The Center of the Universe," St. George, Maine. He can be heard on National Public Radio, and is available for M.C. and dinner speaking engagements.

Notes From Brookfield Farm

by Jack Barnes

FEBRUARY

I do not suppose there are many folks today who rejoice whenever the weatherman forecasts a prolonged cold snap. Certainly there is nothing pleasant about having to leave a warm bed and go out to an unheated garage to attempt to start one's car before the first streak of dawn appears above the distant hills—especially when the thermometer reads twenty below zero.

Those who are fortunate enough to be able to coax their engines into turning over are destined to spend considerable time jump-starting their less fortunate neighbors. In a matter of seconds one's fingers are nearly frozen. Lamentably, the heated oaths of those whose vehicles refuse to respond to the usual repertoire of mechanical endeavors have absolutely no moderating effect upon the outside temperature. All too frequently, a cold spell these days will put both man and machine through a traumatic ordeal.

Those of us who have been on this earth long enough to be referred to as "Senior Citizen" can recall a time, however, when a lengthy cold spell generated an aura of excitement among the rural population wherever there were millponds, lakes, and rivers. For me, living so close to the shores of Sebago Lake, it meant that I could put on my skates in front of the kitchen oven, step out the door, and go gliding across silvery black ice so clear and smooth that I could at times look down and spot a good size salmon swimming along under the ice. It did not matter how

cold it was, nothing kept me from skating.

I would rendezvous with my cousin (known over a wide area in Maine and New Hampshire as "Doc" Barnes), and we would set off in one direction or another to explore snow-covered beaches and ice-encrusted rocky coves. With a couple of candy bars that he snatched from the counter of his parents' store (now known as Jordan's Store at the lower end of Long Beach), we were often able to sustain ourselves for hours at a time—much to the consternation of our mothers when we all too frequently failed to return for lunch.

But for most of the men and boys who lived in one hamlet or another—such as East Sebago, North Sebago, Mud City, Kimball's Corner, Convene or on the scattered farms on Douglas Hill, Peaked Mountain, Poor's Hill, and Hog Fat Hill—a week or so of sub-zero weather meant it was time to set about the business of cutting ice.

So valuable was the copious supply of ice in areas such as along the Kennebec River where shiploads were sent to the South and abroad that it became known as "frozen gold." Many a southern gentleman and his lady sipped tall glasses of mint juleps cooled by the purest ice in the world—Maine ice. However, in all fairness to the state of Massachusetts, according to Henry David Thoreau, ice was shipped all the way to India from Walden Pond along with Emerson's essay "Civil Disobedience"—which inspired Mohandas K. Gandhi.

Except for the lower end of Sebago where the broad waters narrow at Sebago Lake Village, I don't remember too many winters when ice was cut on the lake. The lower end always froze over long before the Big Bay. What I do remember is the beehive of activity that took place just a mile up the road on the millpond at Fitch's

Mill in East Sebago. Ice cutting meant badly-needed money in the pockets of the local men and older boys, for all of the ice houses in the area, including the one that my parents shared with several families, needed to be filled.

There was something suspicious about the tintinnabulation of bells announcing the arrival of the first sled pulled by two evenly-matched horses. Their muscles would ripple and steam would rise into the frigid air from their perspiring bodies. Layer upon layer of icebox-size cubes of prismatic ice would be fit together like snug building blocks and covered with sawdust from the mill—a by-product of an even more vital local industry.

I would often sneak a ride back up to the millpond on the empty sled and was thrilled to death whenever I was given the opportunity to drive the team of horses. I say sneak because I had to be surreptitious about my trips to the village. Mother was most obdurate about the millpond being off limits for me during ice cutting time.

"It's too dangerous," she would say. "You will fall in and drown."

Since I was a good swimmer at four and was perpetually falling into some body of water in the middle of the winter and being dried out—for the most part in my aunt's kitchen to escape the scathing tongue of my diminutive mother or the strong hands of my quick-tempered father—the remote possibility of my falling into the millpond did not seem to justify its being placed off limits. I had all of Sebago Lake to fall into one way or another. Besides, falling into the pond during the process of pulling the cakes of ice up to the chute was a commonplace occurrence for the crew. As I look back now, I recall that most of those who were floundering around in the black water and uttering cuss words that could

melt the ice fell in late in the afternoon; which leads me to suspect that the coffee I thought they were drinking was in fact fermented cider which every farmer kept in copious supply in wooden barrels in his cellar. I never remember hearing that anyone ever drowned, for after a few hearty guffaws and such remarks as, "Well, Luthah, you wan't haff'ta take yo'ah Sat'day night bath," long, brawny arms with meathook-like hands would reach down and effortlessly snatch the thoroughly wet and nearly frozen victim from the frigid waters. Oftentimes he was still gripping his corn-cob pipe firmly between tobacco-stained teeth as he slogged off to the nearest shed or shelter where a fire was kept for just such occasions.

Now that I can look back at those years in more proper perspective, I strongly suspect that the fear of my falling in and being crushed to death by cakes of ice was but a cover up for a greater fear that my somewhat Victorian mother had of my being overexposed to the ribald jokes that the members of the crew took great delight in telling. What she did not know was that during treks to the general store with my father, I had heard about all of the jokes known in the town of Sebago by remaining inconspicuously quiet behind a crack-

er barrel while some of our most notorious storytellers took turns trying to outdo each other.

Despite a constant flow of colorful yarns and frequent trips to what I now suspect were sundry containers of cider thoroughly aged, the ice somehow continued to get cut. Eventually, every cake was filed away in the area's numerous ice houses, with their weathered old boards that matched the wrinkles and furrows of the farmer's faces.

Along about June each year, Mother would announce that it was time to begin using the icebox; and as soon as I was old enough to handle a pair of ice tongs, the task of filling that big green box was assigned to me. The number of trips to the ice house each week depended entirely upon the weather; a real hot spell meant just about every other day. So, one by one, each cake that had been so expertly packed in sawdust was uncovered and snatched from its cool tomb by tongs in a manner that resembled a dentist extracting teeth. It was fun to pretend that I was an archaeologist excavating the ruins of a city for lost treasures. The cake was dropped out the door onto the soft sawdust below, loaded into my wagon or the old wooden wheelbarrow, and conveyed

across the road to the kitchen door where it received a thorough washing to remove every speck of sawdust before it was placed in a compartment in the top of the icebox. There were times when I had to take an ice pick and tailor the block so that it would fit just right. Any chips of ice were eagerly seized by friends and acquaintances and consumed like popsicles.

Then one day my father announced that he was purchasing a Frigidaire. I had no idea what anything with such an exotic sounding name could possibly look like, but I was told I would not have to go to the ice house anymore and Mother would not have to mop up the floor every time she forgot to empty the pan into which the water from the melting ice flowed. Somehow I could not imagine how anyone could plug an ice box into the wall and make something called ice cubes which resembled miniature cakes of ice. But when I was told that Mother could make ice cream and keep it in trays in the Frigidaire, I was sold!

The long-awaited day finally arrived when the Frigidaire was delivered and the faithful ice box was carried out. Of course, I did not realize it then, but I was witnessing the passing of a great era. Ice cutting continued for perhaps a decade, but my connection with the industry was severed the day the Frigidaire arrived. It was not long before our ice house rotted down, and after awhile even the sawdust became thoroughly mixed with the deciduous soil. Now there is scarcely a vestige of the old millpond, for Route 114 has been built where men used to pole logs in the summer and cakes of ice in the winter.

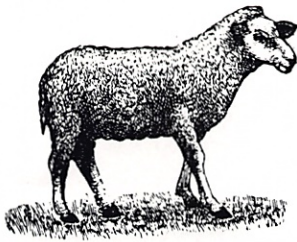
I have an idea that many of us would not complain half as much about the cold winters if we could all turn to and head for the ponds to harvest ice again. ■

**In the March Issue
of BitterSweet**

**Ice-Cutting on the
Kennebec River**

**Photo & Story by
Frank Connors**





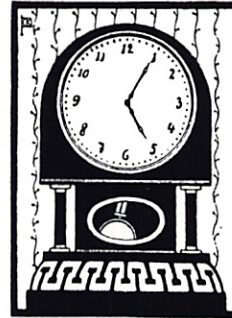
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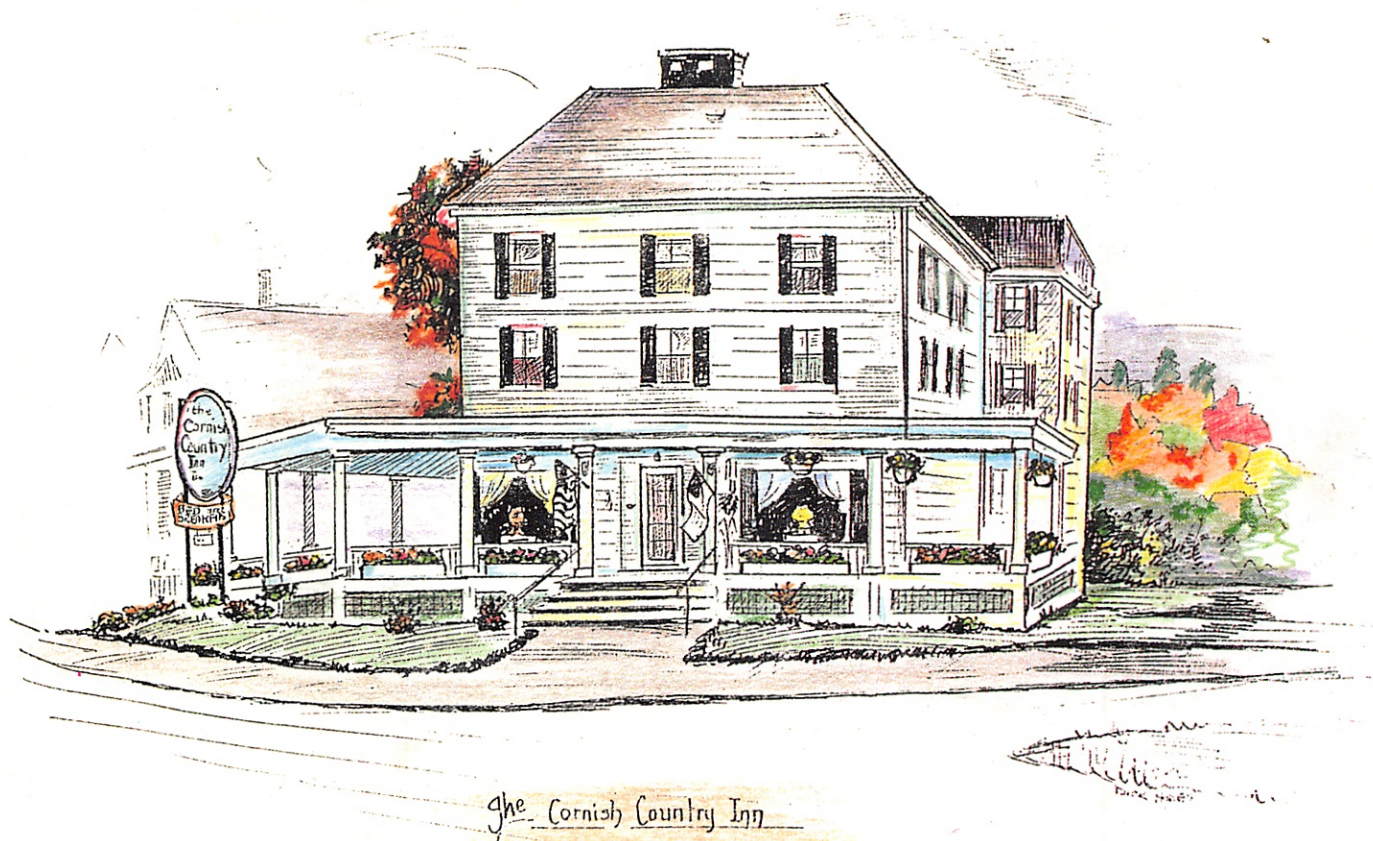
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Index To Our Advertisers

Bean's Restaurant, South Paris, ME	pg. 7	Oxford Mill End Store, Oxford, ME	inside back cover
Bolster Monumental Works, Oxford, ME	pg. 6	Oxford Power Equipment, Oxford, ME	pg. 6
Candy Cane Creations, Yarmouth, ME	pg. 40	Perham's Maine Mineral Store, West Paris, ME	pg. 40
Cilla's Shop, Norway, ME	pg. 12	R. S. Batchelder, Kezar Falls, ME	pg. 40
Cooper Farms, West Paris, ME	pg. 44	Robert L. Milton Agency, So. Paris & Auburn, ME	inside back cover
Cornish Country Inn, Cornish, ME	back cover	Romah Motor Inn, Naples, ME	pg. 12
Folsom's, Alfred, ME	pg. 8	Round Table Agency, Cornish, ME	pg. 12
Friendly River Fretted Instruments, Cornish, ME	pg. 40	SnoCraft, Norway, ME	pg. 8
Frost & Flame, North Windham, ME	pg. 6	Steve's Heating Oil	pg. 6
Kedarburn Inn, Waterford, ME	pg. 7	Sunny Villa, Ossipee, NH	pg. 8
Ledgewood Motel, Norway, Maine	pg. 7	Hanold Tent, No. Windham, ME	pg. 36
Little Ossipee Florist, Limerick, ME	pg. 40	The Tamworth Inn, Tamworth, NH	pg. 10
Long Look Farm, Paris Hill, ME	pg. 12	WOXO Radio, Norway, ME	pg. 10
Morgan Llewellyn, Kearsarge, NH	pg. 12	Yokohama Restaurant, Gorham, NH	pg. 7
Offerman's, Milwaukee, WI	pg. 36	Your Finishing Touches, Kezar Falls, ME	pg. 40



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